English Prose
FROM
Elizabeth to Victoria

Garnett

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SELECTIONS

IN

ENGLISH PROSE

FROM

ELIZABETH TO VICTORIA

(1580–1880).

CHOSEN AND ARRANGED

BY

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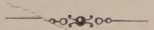

BOSTON, U.S.A.:
PUBLISHED BY GINN & COMPANY.
1891.

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PREFACE.

A PREFACE may be expected to give the *raison d'être* of a book, especially of a book of selections, when one might think this business overdone. But, in the words of Leigh Hunt (Preface to *Imagination and Fancy*), "The Editor has often wished for such a book himself; and as nobody will make it for him, he has made it for others," — and for himself, I would add.

I have long wished to use with my class in English Literature Professor Minto's *Manual of English Prose Literature*, but I thought it useless for students to study the lives of authors and detailed criticism of their style without having in hand examples of that style of sufficient length to enable the student to form some idea of the justness of the criticism. It is true that we have two recent books of prose selections: Saintsbury's *Specimens of English Prose Style from Malory to Macaulay*, and Galton's *English Prose from Maundeville to Thackeray*, but neither of them suited my purpose. Mr. Saintsbury's book contains too many authors and too brief specimens of their style. A book containing ninety-six authors, with specimens varying from two to six pages, would not fulfil the object I had in view. But Mr. Saintsbury has prefixed to his volume an excellent essay on English Prose Style, which should be reprinted in pamphlet form for use with any book of selections. Mr. Galton's book is not liable to the above objection to the same extent, as it con-

tains fifty-six authors, and the selections are of greater length; but some of the authors might be omitted without much loss, and some of the selections here also are too short. I wished, moreover, to suit the selections, as far as was consistent with the object of giving a satisfactory view of the progress of English prose for the last three hundred years, to the leading authors criticised in Professor Minto's *Manual*, and this has been done in the main, the chief exceptions being the writers of the present century, most of whom Professor Minto has criticised all too briefly. The book may, however, be used in connection with any Manual of English Literature.

I cannot expect to satisfy everybody. Some, perhaps, will criticise omissions; others, inclusions. Reasons might be given for the choice of the authors and pieces selected, but it would prolong this Preface to too great length. I should have been glad to include more authors, but I had to bear in mind the compass of a single volume, and I fear that the book is already too bulky. This restriction has, too, prevented me from beginning earlier; but the middle of the reign of Elizabeth was, I think, the beginning of the formation of an English prose style, as it was the beginning of our modern poetry and drama, for Lyly's *Euphues* was contemporary with Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar*, and Lyly's comedies were the first worthy of consideration from a literary point of view. The historical student should extend his studies at least as far back as Wyclif and Chaucer, to see English prose in the making; but the general reader will seldom take up the prose authors before Lyly, and will need more help to interpret them.

I have appended brief notes to these selections, purposely limited to explanations of words and allusions that I thought

desirable for the student, but not intended to take the place of the classical, biographical, or verbal dictionary. The labor of identifying the Latin quotations has been great, and will be appreciated by those only who have undergone similar labor. Some of the quotations have, notwithstanding, eluded my search. The book has occupied much longer time than I anticipated when it was undertaken. The proof has been read repeatedly and with great care, but as I cannot flatter myself that all errors of the press have been eliminated, I shall be obliged for information as to those detected. That the volume may contribute to acquaint the student practically with the formation of English prose style, and may prove to be a help to the teacher, is the earnest wish of the compiler.

JAMES M. GARNETT.

UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA, VA.
July 4, 1890.

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I.

JOHN LYLY.

(1553 or 4 — 1606.)

EUPHUES AND HIS ENGLAND.

EUPHUES GLASSE FOR EUROPE.

[Written in 1580.]

But having entreated[1] sufficiently of the countrey and their conditions, let me come to the Glasse I promised, being the court, where, although I should, as order requireth, beginne with the chiefest, yet I am enforced with the Painter to reserve my best colours to end *Venus*, and to laie the ground with the basest.

First, then, I must tell you of the grave and wise Counsailors, whose foresight in peace warranteth saf[e]tie * in warre, whose provision in plentie, maketh sufficient in dearth, whose care in health is as it were a preparative against sicknesse ; how great their wisdom hath beene in all things, the twentie two yeares peace doth both shew and prove. For what subtilty hath ther[e] bin wrought so closly, what privy attempts so craftily, what rebellions stirred up so disorderly, but they have by policie bewrayed,[2] prevented by wisdome, repressed by justice? What conspiracies abroad, what confederacies at home, what injuries in anye place hath there beene contrived, the which they have not eyther foreseene before they could kindle, or quenched before they could flame?

If anye wilye *Ulysses* should faine madnesse, there was amonge them alwayes some *Palamedes* to reveale him ; if any *Thetis* went

[1] treated. [2] exposed (them).

* "Variations or additions of words, and of important letters in words, from the first editions, are inserted between [ ]." — Arber.

about to keepe hir sonne from the doing of his countrey service, there was also a wise *Ulysses* in the courte to bewraye it: If *Sinon* came with a smoothe tale to bringe in the horse into *Troye*, there hath beene alwayes some couragious *Lacaon* to throwe his speare agaynst the bowelles, whiche, beeing not bewitched with *Lacaon*, hath unfoulded that which *Lacaon* suspected.

If *Argus* with his hundred eyes went prying to undermine *Jupiter*, yet met he with *Mercurie*, who whis[t]elled all his eyes out: in-somuch as ther[e] coulde never yet any craft prevaile against their policie, or any chalenge against their courage. There hath alwayes beene *Achilles* at home to buckle with *Hector* abroad, *Nestors* gravitie to countervaile *Priams* counsail, *Ulisses* subtilties to ma[t]ch with *Antenors* policies. *England* hath al[l] those yat[3] can[4] and have wrestled with al others, wher-of we can require no greater proofe then experience.

Besides they have al[l] a ze[a]lous care for the encreasing of true religion, whose faiths for the most part hath bin [beene] tried through the fire, which they had felt, had not they fledde over the water. More-over the great studie they bend towards schooles of learning, both sufficiently declare that they are not only furtherers of learning, but fathers of the learned. O thrise [thrice] happy *England* where such Counsaylours are, where such people live, where such vertue springeth!

Amonge these shall you finde *Zopirus* that will mangle him-selfe to do his country good, *Achates* that will never start an ynch from his Prince *Aeneas*, *Nausicla* that never wanted a shift in extremitie, *Cato* that ever counsayled to the best, *Ptolomeus Philadelphus* that alwaies maintained learning. Among the number of all which noble and wise counsailors, I can-not but for his honors sake remember the most prudent and right honourable ye Lorde *Burgleigh*, high Treasurer of that Realme, no lesse reverenced for his wisdome than renowmed for his office, more loved at home than feared abroade, and yet more feared for his counsayle amonge

[3] that, *y — th.* [4] Common error of omission of infinitive after auxiliary.

other nations then sworde or fyre, in whome the saying of *Agamemnon* may be verified, who rather wished for one such as *Nestor*, then many such as *Ajax*.

This noble man I found so ready, being but a straunger, to do me good, that neyther I ought to forget him, neyther cease to pray for him, that as he hath the wisdome of *Nestor*, so he may have the age, that having the policies of *Ulysses*, he may have his honor, worthye to lyve long, by whome so manye lyve in quiet, and not unworthy to be advaunced, by whose care so many have beene preferred.

Is not this a Glasse, fayre Ladyes, for all other countrie[s] to beholde, wher[e] there is not only an agreement in fayth, religion, and counsayle, but in friendshyppe, brother-hoode, and lyving? By whose good endevours vice is punyshed, vertue rewarded, peace establyshed, forren broyles repressed, domesticall cares appeased? what nation can of Counsailors desire more? what Dominion, yat excepted, hath so much? when neither courage can prevaile against their chivalrie, nor craft take place agaynst their counsayle, nor both joyned in one be of force to undermine their country. When you have daseled your eies with this Glasse, behold here an other. It was my fortune to be acquainted with certaine English Gentlemen, which brought mee to the court, wher[e] when I came, I was driven into a maze to behold the lusty and brave gallants, the be[a]utiful and chast Ladies, ye rare and godly orders, so as I could not tel whether I should most commend vertue or bravery. At the last, coming oft[e]ner thether then it beseemed one of my degree, yet not so often as they desired my company, I began to prye after theyr manners, natures, and lyves, and that which followeth I saw, where-of who so doubteth, I will sweare.

The Ladyes spend the morning in devout prayer, not resembling the Gentlewoemen in *Greece* and *Italy*, who begin their morning at midnoone, and make their evening at midnight, using sonets for psalmes, and pastymes for prayers, reading ye Epistle of a Lover, when they should peruse the Gospell of our Lorde, drawing wanton

lynes when death is before their face, as *Archimedes* did triangles and circles when the enimy was at his backe. Behold, Ladies, in this glasse that the service of God is to be preferred before all things; imitat[e] the Englysh Damoselles, who have theyr bookes tyed to theyr gyrdles, not fe[a]thers, who are as cunning in ye scriptures, as you are in *Ariosto* or *Petrack* or anye booke that lyketh[5] you best, and becommeth you most.

For bravery[6] I cannot say that you exceede them, for certainly it is ye most gorgeoust [gorgious] court that ever I have seene, read, or heard of, but yet do they not use theyr apperell so nicelye as you in *Italy*, who thinke scorn to kneele at service, for feare of wrinckles in your silks, who dare not lift up your head to heaven, for feare of rumpling ye rufs in your neck, yet your hands I confesse are holden up, rather I thinke to shewe your ringes then to manifest your righteousnesse. The braverie they use is for the honour of their Prince, the attyre you weare for the alluring of your pray; the ritch apparell maketh their beautie more seene, your disguising causeth your faces to be more suspected; they resemble in their rayment the *Estrich* who, being gased on, closeth hir winges and hideth hir fethers; you in your robes are not unlike the pecocke, who, being praysed, spreadeth hir tayle, and bewrayeth hir pride. Velvetts and Silkes in them are like golde about a pure Diamond, in you like a greene hedge about a filthy dunghill. Thinke not, Ladies, that bicause you are decked with golde, you are endued with grace; imagine not that, shining like the Sunne in earth, yea[7] shall climbe the Sunne in heaven; looke diligently into this English glasse, and then shall you see that the more costly your apparell is, the greater your curtesie should be, that you ought to be as farre from pride, as you are from povertie, and as neere to princes in beautie, as you are in brightnes. Bicause you are brave, disdaine not those that are base; thinke with your selves that russet coates have their Christendome, that the Sunne when he is at his h[e]ight shineth aswel upon course carsie,[8] as

[5] pleaseth. [6] finery. [7] ye. [8] kersey.

cloth of tissue ; though you have pearles in your eares, Jewels in your breastes, preacious stones on your fingers, yet disdaine not the stones in the streat, which, although they are nothing so noble, yet are they much more necessarie. Let not your robes hinder your devotion, learne of the English Ladies yat God is worthy to be worshipped with the most price, to whom you ought to give all praise, then shall you be like stars to ye wise, who now are but staring stockes to the foolish, then shall you be praysed of[9] most, who are now pointed at of all, then shall God beare with your folly, who nowe abhorreth your pride.

As the Ladies in this blessed Islande are devout and brave, so are they chast and beautifull, insomuch that, when I first behelde them, I could not tell whether some mist had bleared myne eyes, or some stra[u]ng[e] enchauntment altered my minde, for it may bee, thought I, that in this Island either some *Artimedorus* or *Lisimandro*, or some odd *Nigromancer* did inhabit, who would shewe me Fayries, or the bodie of *Helen*, or the new shape of *Venus*, but comming to my selfe, and seeing that my sences were not chaunged, but hindered, that the place where I stoode was no enchaunted castell, but a gallant court, I could scarce restraine my voyce from crying, *There is no beautie but in England*. There did I behold them of pure complexion, exceeding the lillie and the rose, of favour (wherein ye chiefest beautie consisteth) surpassing the pictures that were feyned [fained],[10] or the Magition that would faine, their eyes pe[a]rcing like the Sun beames, yet chast, their speach pleasant and sweete, yet modest and curteous, their gate comly, their bodies straight, their hands white, al[l] things that man could wish, or women woulde have, which, howe much it is, none can set downe, when as ye one desireth as much as may be, the other more. And to these beautifull mouldes, chast mindes ; to these comely bodies temperance, modestie, mildenesse, sobrietie, whom I often beheld merrie yet wise, conferring with courtiers yet warily, drinking of wine yet moderately, eating

[9] by. [10] feigned.

of delicat[e]s yet but their care ful, list[en]ing to discourses of love but not without reasoning of learning: for there it more delighteth them to talke of Robin hood, then to shoot in his bowe, and greater pleasure they take to heare of love, then to be in love. Heere Ladies is a Glasse that will make you blush for shame, and looke wan for anger; their beautie commeth by nature, yours by art; they encrease their favours with faire water, you maintaine yours with painters colours; the haire they lay out groweth upon their owne heads, your seemelines hangeth upon others; theirs is alwayes in their owne keeping, yours often in the Dyars; their bewtie [beautie] is not lost with a sharpe blast, yours fadeth with a soft breath: Not unlike unto Paper Floures [flowers], which breake as soone as they are touched, resembling the birds in *Ægypt* called *Ibes*, who being handled, loose their feathers, or the serpent *Serapie*, which beeing but toucht with a brake,[11] bursteth. They use their beautie, bicause it is commendable, you bicause you woulde be common; they if they have little, doe not seeke to make it more, you that have none endeavour to bespeake most; if theirs wither by age, they nothing esteeme it; if yours wast by yeares, you goe about to keepe it; they knowe that beautie must faile if life continue, you sweare that it shall not fade if coulours last.

But to what ende, Ladies, doe you alter the giftes of nature by the shiftes of arte? Is there no colour good but white, no Planet bright but *Venus*, no Linnen faire but Lawne? Why goe yee about to make the face fayre by those meanes that are most foule, a thing loathsome to man, and therefore not lovely, horrible before God, and therefore not lawefull?

Have you not hearde that the beautie of the Cradell is most brightest, that paintings are for pictures with-out sence, not for persons with true reason? Follow at the last, Ladies, the Gentlewomen of *England*, who being beautifull doe those thinges as shall beecome so amyable faces, if of an indifferent h[i]ew[e], those

[11] a pointed instrument.

things as they* shall make them lovely, not adding an ounce to beautie, that may detract a dram from vertue. Besides this their chastitie and temparance [temperaunce] is as rare as their beautie, not going in your footesteppes, that drinke wine before you rise to encrease your colour, and swill it when you are up, to provoke your lust: They use their needle to banish idlenes, not the pen to nourish it, not spending their times in answering ye letters of those that woe [12] them, but forswearing the companie of those that write them, giving no occasion either by wanton lookes, unseemely gestures, unadvised speach, or any uncomly behaviour, of lightnesse, or liking. Contrarie to the custome of many countries, where filthie wordes are accompted to savour of a fine witte, broade speach, of a bolde courage, wanton glaunces, of a sharpe eye sight, wicked deedes, of a comely gesture, all vaine delights, of a right curteous curtesie.

And yet are they not in England presise [precise], but wary, disdainefull to conferre,[13] but careful [fearefull] to offende, not without remorse where they perceive trueth, but without replying where they suspect tre[a]cherie, when as among other nations, there is no tale so lothsome to chast eares but it is heard with great sport, and aunswered with great speade [speede].

Is it not then a shame, Ladyes, that that little Island shoulde be a myrrour to you, to Europe, to the whole worlde?

Where is the temperance you professe when wine is more common then water? . . . where the modestie when your mirth turneth to uncleanes, uncleanes to shamelesnes, shamelesnesse to al sinfulnesse? Learne, Ladies, though late, yet at length, that the chiefest title of honour in earth, is to give all honour to him that is in heaven, that the greatest braverie in this worlde, is to be burning lampes in the worlde to come, that the clearest beautie in this life, is to be amiable to him that shall give life eternall: Looke in the Glasse of England, too bright I feare me for your eyes, what is there in your sex that they have not, and what that you should not have?

* So Arber's text. [12] woo. [13] converse.

They are in prayer devoute, in bravery humble, in beautie chast, in feasting temperate, in affection wise, in mirth modest, in al[l] their actions though courtlye, bicause woemen, yet Aungels [Angels], bicause virtuous.

Ah good Ladies, good, I say, for that I love you, I would yee [you] could a little abate that pride of your stomackes, that loosenesse of minde, that lycentious behaviour which I have seene in you, with no smal[l] sorrowe, and can-not remedy with continuall sighes.

They in *England* pray when you play, sowe when you sleep, fast when you feast, and weepe for their sins, when you laugh at your sensualitie.

They frequent the Church to serve God, you to see gallants; they deck them-selves for cle[a]nlinesse, you for pride; . . . they refraine wine, bicause they fear to take too much, you bicause you can take no more. Come, Ladies, with teares I call you, looke in this Glasse, repent your sins past, refrain your present vices, abhor vanities to come, say thus with one voice, *we can see our faults only in the English Glasse;* a Glas of grace to them, of grief to you, to them in the steed of righteousnes, to you in place of repentance. The Lords and Gentlemen in ye [that] court are also an example for all others to fol[l]ow, true tipes [types] of nobility, the only stay and staf[fe] to [of] honor, brave courtiers, stout soldiers, apt to revell in peace, and ryde in warre. In fight fearce [fierce], not dreading death, in friendship firme, not breaking promise, curteous to all that deserve well, cruell to none that deserve ill. Their adversaries they trust not, that sheweth their wisdome, their enimies they feare not, that argueth their courage. They are not apt to proffer injuries, nor fit to take any: loth to pick quarrels, but longing to revenge them.

Active they are in all things, whether it be to wrestle in the games of *Olympia*, or to fight at Barriers in *Palestra*, able to carry as great burthens as *Milo*, of strength to throwe as byg stones as *Turnus*, and what not that eyther man hath done or may do, worthye of such Ladies, and none but they, and Ladies willing to have such Lordes, and none but such.

This is a Glasse for our youth in *Greece*, for your young ones in *Italy*, the English Glasse; behold it, Ladies and Lordes, and all that eyther meane to have pietie, use braverie, encrease beautie, or that desire temperancie, chastitie, witte, wisdome, valure, or any thing that may delight your selves, or deserve praise of others.

But another sight there is in my Glasse, which maketh me sigh for griefe I can-not shewe it, and yet had I rather offend in derogating [14] from my Glasse, then my good will.

Blessed is that Land that hath all commodities to encrease the common wealth, happye is that Islande that hath wise counsailours to maintaine it, vertuous courtiers to beautifie it, noble Gentlemenne to advance it, but to have suche a Prince to governe it as is their Soveraigne queene, I know not whether I should thinke the people to be more fortunate, or the Prince famous, whether their felicitie be more to be had in admiration, that have such a ruler, or hir vertues to be honoured, that hath such royaltie: for such is their estat[e] ther[e] that I am enforced to think that every day is as lucky to the Englishmen, as the sixt day of Februarie hath beene to the *Grecians*.

But I see you gase untill I shew this Glasse, which you having once seene, will make you giddy: Oh Ladies I know not when to begin, nor where to ende: for the more I go about to expresse the brightnes, the more I finde mine eyes bleared; the neerer I desire to come to it, the farther I se[e]me from it, not unlike unto *Simonides*, who being curious to set downe what God was, the more leysure he tooke, the more loth hee was to meddle, saying that in thinges above reach, it was easie to catch a straine,[15] but impossible to touch a Star: and ther[e]fore scarse tollerable to poynt at that which one can never pull at. When *Alexander* had commaunded that none shoulde paint him but *Appelles*, none carve him but *Lysippus*, none engrave him but *Pirgotales* [*Pergotales*], *Parrhasius* framed a Table squared, everye way twoo hun-

[14] detracting. [15] to overexert one's self.

dred foote, which in the borders he trimmed with fresh coulours, and limmed with fine golde, leaving all the other roume [roome] with-out knotte or lyne, which table he presented to *Alexander*, who, no lesse mervailing at the bignes, then at the barenes, demaunded to what ende he gave him a frame with-out face, being so naked, and with-out fashion, being so great. *Parrhasius* aunswered him, let it be lawful for *Parrhasius*, O *Alexander*, to shew a Table wherin he would paint *Alexander*, if it were not unlawfull, and for others to square Timber, though *Lysippus* carve it, and for all to cast brasse though *Pirgoteles* [*Pergoteles*] ingrave it. *Alexander*, perceiving the good minde of *Parrhasius*, pardoned his boldnesse, and preferred[16] his arte: yet enquyring why hee framed the table so bygge, he aunswered that hee thought that frame to bee but little enough for his Picture, when the whole worlde was to little for his personne, saying that *Alexander* must as well be praysed, as paynted, and that all hys victoryes and vertues were not for to bee drawne in the Compasse of a Sygnette, [Signet] but in a fielde.

This aunswer *Alexander* both lyked and rewarded, insomuch that it was lawful ever after for *Parrhasius* both to praise that noble king and to paint him.

In the like manner I hope that, though it be not requisite that any should paynt their Prince in *England*, that can-not sufficiently perfect hir, yet it shall not be thought rashnesse or rudenesse for *Euphues* to frame a table for *Elizabeth*, though he presume not to paynt hir. Let *Appelles* shewe his fine arte, *Euphues* will manifest his faythfull heart, the one can but prove his conceite to blase his cunning, the other his good will to grinde his coulours: hee that whetteth the tooles is not to bee misliked, though hee can-not carve the Image; the worme that spinneth the silke is to be esteemed, though she cannot worke the sampler; they that fell tymber for shippes, are not to be blamed, bicause they can-not builde shippes.

[16] commended.

He that caryeth morter furthereth the building, though hee be no expert Mason; hee that diggeth the garden is to be considered, though he cannot treade the knottes[17]; the Gold-smythes boye must have his wages for blowing the fire, though he can-not fashion the Jewell.

Then, Ladyes, I hope poore *Euphues* shall not bee reviled, though hee deserve not to bee rewarded. I will set downe this *Elizabeth*, as neere as I can: And it may be that, as the *Venus* of *Appelles* not finished, the *Tindarides* of *Nichomachus* not ended, the *Medea* of *Timomachus* not perfected, the table of *Parrhasius* not couloured, brought greater desire to them to consumate them, and to others to see them: so the *Elizabeth* of *Euphues*, being but shadowed for others to vernish, but begun for others to ende, but drawen with a blacke coale, for others to blaze with a bright coulour, may worke either a desire in *Euphues* heereafter, if he live, to ende it, or a minde in those that are better able to amende it, or in all (if none can worke it) a wil[l] to wish it. In the meane season I say as *Zeuxis* did when he had drawen the picture of *Atalanta*, more wil envie me then imitate me, and not commende it though they cannot amende it. But I come to my *England*.

There were for a long time civill wars in this [the] countrey, by reason of several claymes to the Crowne, betweene the two famous and noble houses of *Lancaster* and *Yorke*, either of them pretending to be of the royall bloude, which caused them both to spende their vitall bloode; these jarres continued long, not without great losse, both to the Nobilitie and Communaltie, who, joyning not in one, but divers parts, turned the realme to great ruine, having almost destroyed their countrey before they coulde annoynt a king.

But the lyving God, who was loath to oppresse *England*, at last began to represse injuries, and to give an ende by mercie to those that could finde no ende of malice, nor looke for any ende of mis-

[17] lay out the garden plots.

chiefe. So tender a care hath he alwaies had of that *England* as of a new *Israel*, his chosen and peculier [peculiar] people.

This peace began by a marriage solemnized by Gods speciall providence betweene *Henrie* Earle of *Ritchmond*, heire of the house of *Lancaster*, and *Elizabeth*, daughter to *Edward* the fourth, the undoubted issue and heire of the house of *Yorke*, where by (as they tearme it) the redde Rose and the white were united and joyned together. Out of these Roses sprang two noble buddes, Prince *Arthur* and *Henrie*, the eldest dying without issue, the other of most famous memorie leaving behind him three children, Prince *Edwarde*, the Ladie *Marie*, the Ladie *Elizabeth*. King *Edwarde* lived not long, which coulde never for that Realme have lived too long, but sharpe frostes bite forwarde springes, Easterly windes blasteth towardly[18] blossoms, cruell death spareth not those which we our selves living cannot spare.

The elder sister, the Princes *Marie*, succeeded as next heire to the crowne, and as it chaunced nexte heire to the grave, touching whose life I can say little bicause I was scarce borne, and what others say, of[19] me shalbe forborne.

This Queene being deseased [deceased], *Elizabeth*, being of the age of xxii. yeares, of more beautie then honour, and yet of more honour then any earthly creature, was called from a prisoner to be a Prince, from the castell [Castle] to the crowne, from the feare of loosing hir heade, to be supreame heade. And here, Ladies, it may be you wil[l] move a question, why this noble Ladie was either in daunger of death, or cause of distresse, which, had you thought to have passed in silence, I would notwithstanding have reveiled [revealed].

This Ladie all the time of hir sisters reigne was kept close, as one that tendered[20] not those proceedings which were contrarie to hir conscience, who, having divers enemies, endured many crosses, but so patiently as in hir deepest sorrow, she would rather sigh for the libertie of the gospel then hir own freedome. Suffer-

[18] early. [19] by. [20] favored.

ing her inferiours to triumph over hir, hir foes to threaten hir, hir dissembling friends to undermine hir, learning in all this miserie onely the patience that *Zeno* taught *Eretricus*, to beare and forbeare, never seeking revenge but with good *Lycurgus*, to loose hir owne eye, rather then to hurt an others eye.

But being nowe placed in the seate royall, she first of [all] established religion, banished poperie, advaunced the worde, that before was so much defaced, who having in hir hande the sworde to revenge, used rather bountifully to reward: Being as farre from rigour when shee might have killed, as hir enemies were from honestie when they coulde not, giving a general pardon, when she had cause to use perticuler punishments, preferring the name of pittie before the remembrance of perils, thinking no revenge more princely, then to spare when she might spill,[21] to staye when she might strike, to profer to save with mercie, when she might have destroyed with justice. Heere is the clemencie worthie commendation and admiration, nothing inferiour to the gentle disposition of *Aristides*, who after his exile did not so much as note them that banished him, saying with *Alexander* that there can be nothing more noble then to doe well to those that deserve yll.

This mightie and merciful Queene, having many bils [billes] of private persons, yat sought before time to betray hir, burnt them all, resembling *Julius Cæsar*, who, being presented with ye like complaints of his commons, threw them into ye fire, saying that he had rather not knowe the names of rebels, then have occasion to reveng[e], thinking it better to be ignorant of those that hated him, then to be angrie with them.

This clemencie did hir majestie not onely shew at hir comming to the crowne, but also throughout hir whole governement, when she hath spared to shedde their bloods that sought to spill hirs, not racking the lawes to extremitie, but mittigating the rigour with mercy, insomuch as it may be said of yat royal Monarch as it was of *Antonius*, surnamed ye godly Emperour, who raigned many

[21] destroy.

yeares with-out the effusion of blood. What greater vertue can there be in a Prince then mercy, what greater praise then to abate the edge which she should wette,[22] to pardon where she shoulde punish, to rewarde where she should revenge.

I my selfe being in *England*, when hir majestie was for hir recreation in hir Barge upon ye Thames, hard of a Gun that was shotte off, though of the partie unwittingly, yet to hir noble person daungerously, which fact she most graciously pardoned, accepting a just excuse before a great amends, taking more griefe for hir poore Bargeman that was a little hurt, then care for hir selfe that stoode in greatest hasarde: O rare example of pittie, O singuler spectacle of pietie.

Divers besides have there beene which by private conspiracies, open rebellions, close wiles, cruel witchcraftes, have sought to ende hir life, which saveth all their lives, whose practises by the divine providence of the almightie have ever been disclosed, insomuch that he hath kept hir safe in the whales belly when hir subjects went about to throwe hir into the sea, preserved hir in the [hotte] hoat Oven, when hir enimies encreased the fire, not suffering a haire to [fall] from hir, much lesse any harme to fasten uppon hir. These injuries and treasons of hir subjects, these policies and undermining of forreine nations so little moved hir, yat she woulde often say, Let them knowe that, though it bee not lawfull for them to speake what they list, yet it is [is it] lawfull for us to doe with them what we list, being alwayes of that mercifull minde which was in *Theodosius*, who wished rather that he might call the deade to life, then put the living to death, saying with *Augustus*, when she shoulde set hir hande to any condempnation, I woulde to God we could not writ[e]. Infinite were the ensamples that might be alledged, and almost incredible, whereby shee hath shewed hir selfe a Lambe in meekenesse, when she had cause to be a Lion in might, proved a Dove in favour, when she was provoked to be an Eagle in fiercenesse, requiting injuries with benefits, revenging

[22] whet.

grudges with gifts, in highest majestie bearing the lowest minde, forgiving all that sued for mercie, and forgetting all that deserved Justice.

O divine nature, O heavenly nobilitie, what thing can there more be required in a Prince then in greatest power to shewe greatest patience, in chiefest glorye to bring forth chiefest grace, in abundaunce of all earthlye pom[p]e to manifest aboundaunce of all heavenlye pietie: O fortunate *England* that hath such a Queene, ungratefull, if thou praye not for hir, wicked, if thou do not love hir, miserable, if thou loose hir.

Heere, Ladies, is a Glasse for all Princes to behold, that being called to dignitie, they use moderation, not might, tempering the severitie of the lawes with the mildnes of love, not executing al[l] they wil, but shewing what they may. Happy are they, and onely they, that are under this glorious and gracious Sovereigntie; insomuch that I accompt all those abjects, that be not hir subjectes.

But why doe I treade still in one path, when I have so large a fielde to walke, or lynger about one flower, when I have manye to gather: where-in I resemble those that, beeinge delighted with the little brooke, neglect the fountaines head, or that painter that, being curious to coulour *Cupids* Bow, forgot to paint the string.

As this noble Prince is endued with mercie, pacience and moderation, so is she adourned with singuler beautie and chastitie, excelling in the one *Venus*, in the other *Vesta*. Who knoweth not how rare a thing it is Ladies to match virginitie with beautie, a chast[e] minde with an amiable face, divine cogitations with a comelye countenaunce? But suche is the grace bestowed uppon this earthlye Goddesse, that, having the beautie that myght allure all Princes, she hath the chastitie also to refuse all, accounting [accompting] it no lesse praise to be called a Virgin, then to be esteemed a *Venus*, thinking it as great honour to bee found chast[e], as thought amiable. Where is now *Electra* the chast[e] Daughter of *Agamemnon*? Where is *Lala*, that renoumed Virgin? Wher is *Aemilia*, that through hir chastitie wrought wonders, in maintayning continuall fire at the Altar of *Vesta*? Where is

Claudia, that to manifest hir virginitie set the Shippe on float with hir finger, that multitudes could not remove by force? Where is *Tuscia*, one of the same order, that brought to passe no lesse mervailes by carrying water in a sive, not shedding one drop from *Tiber* to the Temple of *Vesta*? If Virginitie have such force, then what hath this chast Virgin *Elizabeth* don[e], who by the space of twenty and odde yeares with continuall peace against all policies, with sundry myracles contrary to all hope, hath governed that noble Island? Against whom neyther forre[i]n force, nor civill fraude, neyther discorde at home, nor conspiracies abroad, could prevaile. What greater mervaile hath happened since the beginning of the world, then for a young and tender Maiden to govern strong and valiaunt menne, then for a Virgin to make the whole worlde, if not to stand in awe of hir, yet to honour hir, yea and to live in spight of all those that spight hir, with hir sword in the she[a]th, with hir armour in the Tower, with hir souldiers in their gownes, insomuch as hir peace may be called more blessed then the quiet raigne of *Numa Pompilius*, in whose government the Bees have made their hives in the soldiers helmettes? Now is the Temple of *Janus* removed from *Rome* to *England*, whose dore hath not bene opened this twentie yeares, more to be mervayled at then the regiment[23] of *Debora*, who ruled twentie yeares with religion, or *Semeriamis* [*Semyramis*], that governed long with power, or *Zenobia*, that reigned six yeares in prosperitie.

This is the onelye myracle that virginitie ever wrought, for a little Island environed round about with warres to stande in peace, for the walles of *Fraunce* to burne, and the houses of *England* to freese, for all other nations eyther with civile [cruell] sworde to bee devided, or with forren foes to be invaded, and that countrey neyther to be molested with broyles in their owne bosomes, nor threatned with blasts of other borderers: But alwayes though not laughing, yet looking through an Emeraud at others jarres.

[23] rule.

Their fields have beene sowne with corne, straungers theirs pytched with Camps; they have their men reaping their harvest, when others are mustring in their harneis; they use their peeces to fowle for pleasure, others their Calivers[24] for feare of perrill. O blessed peace, oh happy Prince, O fortunate people: The lyving God is onely the English God, wher[e] he hath placed peace, which bryngeth all plentie, annoynted a Virgin Queene, which with a wand ruleth hir owne subjects, and with hir worthinesse winneth the good willes of straungers, so that she is no lesse gratious among hir own, then glorious to others, no lesse loved of hir people, then merva[i]led at of other nations.

This is the blessing that Christ alwayes gave to his people, peace: This is the curse that hee giveth to the wicked, there shall bee no peace to the ungodlye: This was the onely salutation hee used to his Disciples, *peace be unto you*: And therefore is hee called the G O D of love, and peace in hollye [holy] writte.

In peace was the Temple of the Lorde buylt by *Salomon*, Christ would not be borne untill there were peace through-out the whole worlde, this was the only thing that *Esechias* prayed for, let there be trueth and peace, O Lorde, in my dayes. All which examples doe manifestly prove, that ther[e] can be nothing given of God to man more notable than peace.

This peace hath the Lorde continued with great and unspeakeable goodnesse amonge his chosen people of *England*. How much is that nation bounde to such a Prince, by whome they enjoye all benefits of peace, having their barnes full, when others famish, their cof[f]ers stuffed with gold, when others have no silver, their wives without daunger, when others are defamed, their daughters chast, when others are defloured, theyr houses furnished, when others are fired, where they have all thinges for superfluitie, others nothing to sustaine their neede. This peace hath God given for hir vertues, pittie, moderation, virginitie, which peace, the same God of peace continue for his names sake.

[24] muskets.

Touching the beautie of this Prince, hir countenaunce, hir personage, hir majestie, I can-not thinke that it may be sufficiently commended, when it can-not be too much mervailed at: So that I am constrained to saye as *Praxitiles* did, when hee beganne to paynt *Venus* and hir Sonne, who doubted whether the worlde could affoorde coulours good enough for two such fayre faces, and I whether our tongue canne yeelde wordes to blase that beautie, the perfection where-of none canne imagine, which seeing it is so, I must doe like those that want a cleere sight, who being not able to discerne the Sunne in the Skie are inforced to beholde it in the water. *Zeuxis* having before him fiftie faire virgins of *Sparta* where by to draw one amiable *Venus*, said that fiftie more fayrer than those coulde not minister sufficient beautie to shewe the Godesse of beautie; therefore being in dispaire either by art to shadow hir, or by imagination to comprehend hir, he drew in a table a faire temple, the gates open, and *Venus* going in, so as nothing coulde be perceived but hir backe, wherein he used such cunning that *Appelles* himselfe seeing this worke, wished yat *Venus* woulde turne hir face, saying yat if it were in all partes agreeable to the backe, he woulde become apprentice to *Zeuxis*, and slave to *Venus*. In the like manner fareth it with me, for having all the Ladyes in *Italy* more than fiftie hundered, whereby to coulour *Elizabeth*, I must say with *Zeuxis*, that as many more will not suffise, and therefore in as great an agonie paint hir court with hir back towards you, for yat I cannot by art portraie hir beautie, wherein though I want the skill to doe it as *Zeuxis* did, yet v[i]ewing it narrowly, and comparing it wisely, you all will say yat if hir face be aunswerable to hir backe, you wil[l] like my handi-crafte, and become hir handmaides. In the meane season I leave you gazing untill she turne hir face, imagining hir to be such a one as nature framed to yat end, that no art should imitate, wherein shee hath proved hir selfe to bee exquisite, and painters to be Apes.

This Beautifull moulde when I behelde to be endued with chastitie, temperance, mildnesse, and all other good giftes of nature (as hereafter shall appeare) when I saw hir to surpasse all in

beautie, and yet a virgin, to excell all in pietie, and yet a prince, to be inferiour to none in all the liniaments of the bodie, and yet superiour to every one in all giftes of the minde, I beegan thus to pray, that as she hath lived fortie yeares a virgin in great majestie, so she may lyve fourescore yeares a mother with great joye, that as with hir we have long time hadde peace and plentie, so by hir we may ever have quietnesse and aboundaunce, wishing this even from the bottome of a heart that wisheth well to *England*, though feareth ill, that either the world may ende before she dye, or she lyve to see hir childrens children in the world: otherwise, how tickle[25] their state is yat now triumph, upon what a twist they hang that now are in honour, they yat lyve shal see which I to thinke on sigh. But God for his mercies sake, Christ for his merits sake, ye holy Ghost for his names sake, graunt to that realme comfort without anye ill chaunce, and the Prince they have without any other chaunge, that ye longer she liveth the sweeter she may smell, lyke the bird *Ibis*, that she maye be triumphant in victories lyke the Palme tree, fruitfull in hir age lyke the Vyne, in all ages prosperous, to all men gratious, in all places glorious: so that there be no ende of hir praise, untill the ende of all flesh.

Thus did I often talke with my selfe, and wishe with mine whole soule [heart].

What should I talke of hir sharpe wit, excellent wisdome, exquisite learning, and all other qualities of the minde, where-in she seemeth as farre to excell those that have bene accompted singular, as the learned have surpassed those that have bene thought simple?

In questioning not inferiour to *Nicaulia* the Queene of *Saba*, that did put so many hard doubts to *Salomon*, equall to *Nicostrata* in the *Greeke* tongue, who was thought to give precepts for the better perfection: more learned in the *Latine* then *Amalasunta*: passing *Aspasia* in Philosophie, who taught *Pericles*: exceeding in judgement *Themistoclea*, who instructed *Pithagoras*,

[25] unsteady.

adde to these qualyties those that none of these had, the *French* tongue, the *Spanish*, the *Italian*, not meane in every one, but excellent in all, readyer to correct escapes[26] in those languages, then to be controlled, fitter to teach others, then learne of anye, more able to adde new rules, then to err in ye olde: Insomuch as there is no Embassadour that commeth into hir court, but she is willing and able both to understand his message, and utter hir minde, not lyke unto ye Kings of *Assiria*, who aunswere[d] Embassades by messengers, while they themselves either dally in sinne, or snort in sleepe. Hir godly zeale to learning, with hir great skil, hath bene so manifestly approved, yat I cannot tell whether she deserve more honour for hir knowledge, or admiration for hir curtesie, who in great pompe hath twice directed hir Progresse unto the Universities, with no lesse joye to the Students then glory to hir State. Where, after long and solempne disputations in Law, Phisicke, and Divinitie, not as one we[a]ried with Schollers arguments, but wedded to their orations, when every one feared to offend in length, she in hir own person, with no lesse praise to hir Majestie, then delight to hir subjects, with a wise and learned conclusion, both gave them thankes, and put selfe[27] to paines. O noble patterne of a princelye minde, not like to ye kings of *Persia*, who in their progresses did nothing els but cut stickes to drive away the time, nor like ye delicate lives of the *Sybarites*, who would not admit any Art to be exercised within their citie, yat might make ye least noyse. Hir wit so sharp, that if I should repeat the apt aunsweres, ye subtil questions, ye fine speaches, ye pithie sentences, which on ye sodain she hath uttered, they wold rather breed admiration then credit. But such are ye gifts yat ye living God hath indued hir with-all, that looke in what Arte or Language, wit or learning, vertue or beautie, any one hath particularly excelled most, she onely hath generally exceeded every one in al, insomuch that there is nothing to bee added, that either man would wish in a woman, or God doth give to a creature.

[26] mistakes. [27] herself: perhaps *hir* omitted in Arber's text.

I let passe hir skill in Musicke, hir knowledg[e] in al[l] ye other sciences, when as I feare least by my simplicity I shoulde make them lesse then they are, in seeking to shewe howe great they are, unlesse I were praising hir in the gallerie of *Olympia*, where gyving forth one worde, I might heare seven.

But all these graces[28] although they be to be wondered at, yet hir politique governement, hir prudent counsaile, hir zeale to religion, hir clemencie to those that submit, hir stoutnesse to those that threaten, so farre exceede all other vertues that they are more easie to be mervailed at then imitated.

Two and twentie yeares hath she borne the sword with such justice that neither offenders coulde complaine of rigour, nor the innocent of wrong, yet so tempered with mercie, as malefactours have beene sometimes pardoned upon hope of grace, and the injured requited to ease their griefe, insomuch that in ye whole course of hir glorious raigne, it coulde never be saide that either the poore were oppressed without remedie, or the guiltie repressed without cause, bearing this engraven in hir noble heart, that justice without mercie were extreame injurie, and pittie without equitie plaine partialitie, and that it is as great tyranny not to mitigate Laws as iniquitie to breake them.

Hir care for the flourishing of the Gospell hath wel appeared, when as neither the curses of the Pope, (which are blessings to good people) nor the threatenings of kings, (which are perillous to a Prince) nor the perswasions of Papists (which are Honny to the mouth) could either feare[29] hir, or allure hir, to violate the holy league contracted with Christ, or to maculate the blood of the aunciente Lambe, whiche is Christ. But alwayes constaunt in the true fayth, she hath to the exceeding joye of hir subjectes, to the unspeakeable comforte of hir soule, to the great glorye of God, establyshed that religion, the mayntenance where-of shee rather seeketh to confirme by fortitude, then leave off for feare, knowing that there is nothing that smelleth sweeter to the Lorde then a

[28] No predicate for this subject. [29] frighten.

sounde spirite, which neyther the hostes of the ungodlye, nor the horror of death, can eyther remo[o]ve or move.

This Gospell with invincible courage, with rare constancie, with hotte zeale shee hath maintained in hir owne countries with-out chaunge, and defended against all kingdomes that sought chaunge, in-somuch that all nations rounde about hir, threatninge alteration, shaking swordes, throwing fyre, menacing famyne, murther, destruction, desolation, shee onely hath stoode like a Lampe [Lambe] on the toppe of a hill, not fearing the blastes of the sharpe winds, but trusting in his providence that rydeth uppon the winges of the foure windes. Next followeth the love shee beareth to hir subjectes, who no lesse tendereth them then the apple of hir owne eye, shewing hir selfe a mother to the a[f]flicted, a Phisition to the sicke, a Sovereigne and mylde Governesse to all.

Touchinge hir Magnanimitie, hir Majestie, hir Estate royall, there was neyther *Alexander*, nor *Galba* the Emperour, nor any that might be compared with hir.

This is she that resembling the noble Queene of *Navarr[e]*, useth the Marigolde for hir flower, which at the rising of the Sunne openeth hir leaves, and at the setting shutteth them, referring all hir actions and endevours to him that ruleth the Sunne. This is that *Cæsar* that first bound the Crocodile to the Palme tree, bridling those that sought to raine [rayne] hir: This is that good Pelican that to feede hir people spareth not to rend hir owne personne: This is that mightie Eagle, that hath throwne dust into the eyes of the Hart, that went about to worke destruction to hir subjectes, into whose winges although the blinde Beetle would have crept, and so being carryed into hir nest, destroyed hir young ones, yet hath she with the vertue of hir fethers, consumed that flye in his owne fraud.

She hath exiled the Swallowe that sought to spoyle the Grashopper, and given bytter Almondes to the ravenous Wolves that ende[a]vored to devoure the silly Lambes, burning even with the breath of hir mouth like ye princ[e]ly Stag, the serpents yat wer[e] engendred by the breath of the huge Elephant, so that now all hir

enimies are as whist[30] as the bird *Attagen*, who never singeth any tune after she is taken, nor they beeing so overtaken.

But whether do I wade, Ladyes, as one forgetting him-selfe, thinking to sound the dep[t]h of hir vertues with a few fadomes, when there is no bottome: For I knowe not how it commeth to passe that, being in this Laborinth, I may sooner loose my selfe then finde the ende.

Beholde, Ladyes, in this Glasse a Queene, a woeman, a Virgin in all giftes of the bodye, in all graces of the minde, in all perfection of eyther, so farre to excell all men, that I know not whether I may thinke the place too badde for hir to dwell amonge men.

To talke of other thinges in that Court, wer[e] to bring Egges after apples, or after the setting out of the Sunne, to tell a tale of a Shaddow.

But this I saye, that all offyces are looked to with great care, that vertue is embraced of[19] all, vice hated, religion daily encreased, manners reformed, that who so seeth the place there, will thinke it rather a Church for divine service, then a Court for Princes delight.

This is the Glasse, Ladies, wher-in I woulde have you gase, wher-in I tooke my whole delight; imitate the Ladyes in *England*, amende your manners, rubbe out the wrinckles of the minde, and be not curious about the weams[31] in the face. As for their *Elizabeth*, sith[32] you can neyther sufficiently mervaile at hir, nor I prayse hir, let us all pray for hir, which is the onely duetie we can performe, and the greatest that we can proffer.

Yours to commaund
Euphues.

[30] still. [31] blemishes. [32] since.

II.

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

(1554—1586.)

AN APOLOGIE FOR POETRIE.

[Written about 1581.]

Sith[1] then Poetrie is of all humane learning the most auncient, and of most fatherly antiquitie, as from whence other learnings have taken theyr beginnings: sith it is so universall that no learned Nation dooth despise it, nor no barbarous Nation is without it: sith both Roman and Greek gave divine names unto it: the one of prophecying, the other of making. And that, indeede, that name of making is fit for him; considering that where as other Arts retaine themselves within their subject, and receive, as it were, their beeing from it: the Poet onely bringeth his owne stuffe, and dooth not learne a conceite[2] out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceite: Sith neither his description, nor his ende, contayneth any evill, the thing described cannot be evill: Sith his effects be so good as to teach goodness and to delight the learners: Sith therein, (namely in morrall doctrine, the chiefe of all knowledges,) hee dooth not onely farre passe the Historian, but for instructing is well nigh comparable to the Philosopher: and for moving leaves him behind him: Sith the holy scripture (wherein there is no uncleannes) hath whole parts in it poeticall. And that even our Saviour Christ vouchsafed to use the flowers of it: Sith all his kindes are not onlie in their united formes, but in their severed dissections fully commendable, I think, (and think I

[1] since. [2] idea.

thinke rightly) the Lawrell crowne appointed for tryumphing Captaines doth worthilie (of al other[3] learnings) honor the Poets tryumph. But because wee have eares aswell as tongues, and that the lightest reasons that may be, will seeme to weigh greatly, if nothing be put in the counter-ballance: let us heare, and aswell as wee can, ponder what objections may bee made against this Arte, which may be worthy, eyther of yeelding, or answering.

First truely I note, not onely in these *Mysomousoi*, Poet-haters, but in all that kinde of people, who seek a prayse by dispraysing others, that they doe prodigally spend a great many wandering wordes in quips and scoffes; carping and taunting at each thing, which by styrring the Spleene, may stay the braine from a through beholding the worthines of the subject.

Those kinde[3] of objections, as they are full of very idle easines, sith there is nothing of so sacred a majestie, but that an itching tongue may rubbe it selfe upon it: so deserve they no other answer, but in steed of laughing at the jest, to laugh at the jester. Wee know a playing wit can prayse the discretion of an Asse, the comfortablenes of being in debt, and the jolly commoditie[4] of beeing sick of the plague. So of the contrary side, if we will turne *Ovids* verse,

Ut lateat virtus proximitate mali,[5]

that good lye hid in the neerenesse of the evill: *Agrippa* will be as merry in shewing the vanitie of Science, as *Erasmus* was in commending of follie. Neyther shall any man or matter escape some touch of these smyling raylers. But for *Erasmus* and *Agrippa*, they had another foundation then the superficiall part would promise. Mary, these other pleasant Fault-finders, who wil correct the Verbe before they understande the Noune, and confute others knowledge before they confirme theyr owne: I would have them onely remember that scoffing commeth not of

[3] Common phrase in Elizabethan English, though incorrect.

[4] advantage.

[5] Possibly after Ovid's Art of Love, II. 662: *Et lateat vitium proximitate boni*, And vice may lie hid in the nearness of good.

wisedom. So as the best title in true English they gette with their merriments, is to be called good fooles: for so have our grave Fore-fathers ever termed that humorous kinde of jesters: but that which gyveth greatest scope to their scorning humors, is ryming and versing. It is already sayde (and as I think, trulie sayde) it is not ryming and versing that maketh Poesie. One may bee a Poet without versing, and a versifier without Poetry. But yet, presuppose it were inseparable (as indeede it seemeth *Scaliger* judgeth) truelie it were an inseparable commendation. For if *Oratio*, next to *Ratio*, Speech next to Reason, bee the greatest gyft bestowed upon mortalitie: that can not be praiselesse, which dooth most pollish that blessing of speech, which considers each word, not only (as a man may say) by his forcible qualitie, but by his best measured quantitie, carrying even in themselves a Harmonie: (without (perchaunce) Number, Measure, Order, Proportion, be in our time growne odious.) But lay a side the just prayse it hath, by beeing the onely fit speech for Musick, (Musick I say, the most divine striker of the sences:) thus much is undoubtedly true, that if reading bee foolish without remembring, memorie being the onely treasurer of knowled[g]e, those words which are fittest for memory are likewise most convenient for knowledge.

Now, that Verse farre exceedeth Prose in the knitting up of the memory, the reason is manifest. The words, (besides theyr delight which hath a great affinitie to memory,) beeing so set, as one word cannot be lost, but the whole worke failes: which accuseth it selfe, calleth the remembrance backe to it selfe, and so most strongly confirmeth it; besides, one word so as it were begetting another, as be it in ryme or measured verse, by the former a man shall have a neere guesse to the follower: lastly, even they that have taught the Art of memory, have shewed nothing so apt for it as a certaine roome devided into many places well and thoroughly knowne. Now, that hath the verse in effect perfectly: every word having his naturall seate, which seate must needes make the words remembred. But what needeth more in a thing

so knowne to all men? who is it that ever was a scholler, that doth not carry away some verses of *Virgill*, *Horace*, or *Cato*, which in his youth he learned, and even to his old age serve him for howrely lessons? but the fitnes it hath for memory, is notably proved by all delivery of Arts: wherein for the most part, from Grammer, to Logick, Mathematick, Phisick, and the rest, the rules chiefely necessary to bee borne away are compiled in verses. So that, verse being in it selfe sweete and orderly, and beeing best for memory, the onely handle of knowledge, it must be in jest that any man can speake against it. Nowe then goe wee to the most important imputations laid to the poore Poets, for ought I can yet learne they are these, first, that there beeing many other more fruitefull knowledges, a man might better spend his tyme in them, then in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lyes. Thirdly, that it is the Nurse of abuse, infecting us with many pestilent desires: with a Syrens sweetness drawing the mind to the Serpents tayle of sinful fancy. And heerein especially Comedies give the largest field to erre, as *Chaucer* sayth: howe both in other Nations and in ours, before Poets did soften us, we were full of courage, given to martiall exercises; the pillars of manlyke liberty, and not lulled a sleepe in shady idlenes with Poets pastimes. And lastly, and chiefely, they cry out with an open mouth, as if they out shot *Robin Hood*, that *Plato* banished them out of hys Common-wealth. Truely, this is much, if there be much truth in it. First to the first: that a man might better spend his tyme, is a reason indeede: but it doth (as they say) but *Petere principium*[6]: for if it be as I affirme, that no learning is so good as that which teacheth and mooveth to vertue; and that none can both teach and move thereto so much as Poetry: then is the conclusion manifest that Incke and Paper cannot be to a more profitable purpose employed. And certainly, though a man should graunt their first assumption, it should followe (me thinkes) very unwillingly that good is not good, because better is better.

[6] *Beg the question.*

But I still and utterly denye that there is sprong out of earth a more fruiteful knowledge. To the second therefore, that they should be the principall lyars; I aunswere paradoxically, but truely, I thinke truely; that of all Writers under the sunne, the Poet is the least lier: and though he would, as a Poet can scarcely be a lyer, the Astronomer, with his cosen the Geometrician, can hardly escape, when they take upon them to measure the height of the starres.

How often, thinke you, doe the Phisitians lye, when they aver things good for sicknesses, which afterwards send *Charon* a great nomber of soules drown[e]d in a potion before they come to his Ferry? And no lesse of the rest which take upon them to affirme. Now, for the Poet, he nothing affirmes, and therefore never lyeth. For, as I take it, to lye is to affirme that to be true which is false. So as the other Artists, and especially the Historian, affirming many things, can in the cloudy knowledge of mankinde hardly escape from many lyes. But the Poet (as I sayd before) never affirmeth. The Poet never maketh any circles about your imagination, to conjure you to beleeve for true what he writes. Hee citeth not authorities of other Histories, but even for hys entry calleth the sweete Muses to inspire into him a good invention: in troth, not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what should or should not be: and therefore, though he recount things not true, yet because hee telleth them not for true, he lyeth not, without[7] we will say, that *Nathan* lyed in his specch before alledged to *David*. Which as a wicked man durst scarce say, so think I, none so simple would say that *Esope* lyed in the tales of his beasts: for who thinks that *Esope* writ it for actually true, were well worthy to have his name c[h]ronicled among the beastes hee writeth of.

What childe is there that, comming to a Play, and seeing *Thebes* written in great Letters upon an olde doore, doth beleeve that it is *Thebes?* If then, a man can arrive at that childs age, to know

[7] Use of *without* as conjunction, now incorrect.

that the Poets persons and dooings are but pictures what should be, and not stories what have beene, they will never give the lye to things not affirmatively, but allegorically, and figurativelie written. And therefore, as in Historie, looking for trueth, they goe away full fraught with falshood: so in Poesie, looking for fiction, they shal use the narration but as an imaginative groundplot of a profitable invention.

But heereto is replyed, that the Poets gyve names to men they write of, which argueth a conceite of an actuall truth, and so, not being true, prooves a falshood. And doth the Lawyer lye then, when under the names of *John a stile* and *John a noakes*, hee puts his case? But that is easily answered. Theyr naming of men is but to make theyr picture the more lively, and not to builde any historie: paynting men, they cannot leave men namelesse. We see we cannot play at Chesse, but that wee must give names to our Chesse-men; and yet mee thinks, hee were a very partiall Champion of truth, that would say we lyed for giving a peece of wood the reverend title of a Bishop. The Poet nameth *Cyrus* or *Aeneas* no other way than to shewe what men of theyr fames, fortunes, and estates, should doe.

Their third is, how much it abuseth mens wit, trayning it to wanton sinfulnes, and lustfull love: for indeed that is the principall, if not the onely, abuse I can heare alledged. They say, the Comedies rather teach, then reprehend, amorous conceits. They say, the Lirick is larded with passionate Sonnets. The Elegiack weepes the want of his mistresse. And that even to the Heroical. *Cupid* hath ambitiously climed. Alas, Love, I would thou couldest as well defende thy selfe, as thou canst offende others. I would those, on whom thou doost attend, could eyther put thee away, or yeelde good reason why they keepe thee. But grant love of beautie to be a beastlie fault, (although it be very hard, sith onely man, and no beast, hath that gyft, to discerne beauty.) Grant that lovely name of Love to deserve all hateful reproches: (although even some of my Maisters the Phylosophers, spent a good deale of their Lamp-oyle, in setting foorth the excellencie

of it.) Grant, I say, what soever they wil have granted; that not onely love, but lust, but vanitie, but (if they list) scurrilitie, possesseth many leaves of the Poets bookes: yet thinke I, when this is granted, they will finde theyr sentence may with good manners, put the last words foremost: and not say that Poetrie abuseth mans wit, but that mans wit abuseth Poetrie.

For I will not denie but that mans wit may make Poesie, (which should be *Eikastike*,[8] which some learned have defined, figuring foorth good things,) to be *Phantastike*[9]: which doth contrariwise, infect the fancie with unworthy objects. As the Painter, that shoulde give to the eye eyther some excellent perspective, or some fine picture, fit for building or fortification: or contayning in it some notable example, as *Abraham*, sacrificing his sonne *Isaack*, *Judith* killing *Holofernes*, *David* fighting with *Goliah*, may leave those, and please an ill-pleased eye, with wanton shewes of better hidden matters. But what, shall the abuse of a thing make the right use odious? Nay truely, though I yeeld that Poesie may not onely be abused, but that beeing abused, by the reason of his sweete charming force, it can doe more hurt than any other Armie of words: yet shall it be so far from concluding that the abuse should give reproch to the abused, that contrariwise it is a good reason, that whatsoever being abused, dooth most harme, beeing rightly used, (and upon the right use each thing conceiveth his title) doth most good.

Doe wee not see the skill of Phisick, (the best rampire[10] to our often-assaulted bodies) beeing abused, teach poyson the most violent destroyer? Dooth not knowledge of Law, whose end is to even and right all things, being abused, grow the crooked fosterer of horrible injuries? Doth not (to goe to the highest) Gods word abused, breed heresie? and his Name abused, become blasphemie? Truely, a needle cannot doe much hurt, and as truely, (with leave of Ladies be it spoken) it cannot doe much good. With a sword, thou maist kill thy Father, and with a sword thou

[8] representative or imitative. [9] imaginative. [10] defence.

maist defende thy Prince and Country. So that, as in their calling Poets the Fathers of lyes, they say nothing: so in this theyr argument of abuse, they proove the commendation.

They alledge heere-with, that before Poets beganne to be in price, our Nation hath set their harts delight upon action, and not upon imagination: rather doing things worthy to bee written, than writing things fitte to be done. What that before tyme was, I thinke scarcely *Sphinx* can tell: Sith no memory is so auncient that hath the precedence of Poetrie. And certaine it is, that in our plainest homelines, yet never was the *Albion* Nation without Poetrie. Mary, thys argument, though it bee leaveld against Poetrie, yet is it, indeed, a chaine-shot against all learning, or bookishnes, as they commonly tearme it. Of such minde were certaine *Gothes*, of whom it is written, that having in the spoile of a famous Citie, taken a fayre librarie: one hangman (bee-like fitte to execute the fruites of their wits) who had murthered a great number of bodies, would have set fire on it: no, sayde another, very gravely, take heede what you doe, for whyle they are busie about these toyes, wee shall with more leysure conquer their Countries.

This indeede is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance, and many wordes sometymes I have heard spent in it: but because this reason is generally against all learning, aswell as Poetrie; or rather, all learning but Poetry: because it were too large a digression, to handle, or at least, to superfluous: (sith it is manifest, that all government of action, is to be gotten by knowledg, and knowledge best, by gathering many knowledges, which is, reading,) I onely with *Horace*, to him that is of that opinion,

Jubeo stultum esse libenter:[11]

for, as for Poetrie it selfe, it is the freest from thys objection. For Poetrie is the companion of the Campes.

[11] *Bid him be foolish willingly.* Perhaps after HORACE, *Satires*, I. 1. 63:—

Jubeas miserum esse, libenter
Quatenus id facit.

I dare undertake, *Orlando Furioso*, or honest King *Arthur*, will never displease a Souldier: but the quiddity of *Ens*, and *Prima materia*,[12] will hardely agree with a Corslet: and therefore, as I said in the beginning, even Turks and Tartares are delighted with Poets. *Homer*, a Greek, florished before Greece florished. And if to a slight conjecture, a conjecture may be opposed: truly it may seeme that, as by him their learned men tooke almost their first light of knowledge, so their active men received their first motions of courage. Onlie *Alexanders* example may serve, who by *Plutarch* is accounted of such vertue that Fortune was not his guide, but his foote-stoole: whose acts speake for him, though *Plutarch* did not: indeede, the Phœnix of warlike Princes. This *Alexander* left his Schoolemaister, living *Aristotle*, behinde him, but tooke deade *Homer* with him: he put the Philosopher *Calisthenes* to death, for his seeming philosophicall, indeed mutinous stubburnnes. But the chiefe thing he ever was heard to wish for, was, that *Homer* had been alive. He well found, he received more braverie of minde bye the patterne of *Achilles*, then by hearing the definition of Fortitude: and therefore, if *Cato* misliked *Fulvius* for carrying *Ennius* with him to the fielde, it may be aunswered, that if *Cato* misliked it, the noble *Fulvius* liked it, or els he had not doone it: for it was not the excellent *Cato Uticensis*, (whose authority I would much more have reverenced,) but it was the former[13]: in truth, a bitter punisher of faults, but else a man that had never wel sacrificed to the Graces. Hee misliked and cryed out upon all Greeke learning, and yet being 80. yeeres olde, began to learne it. Be-like, fearing that *Pluto* understood not Latine. Indeede, the Romaine lawes allowed no person to be carried to the warres, but hee that was in the Souldiers role: and therefore, though *Cato* misliked his unmustered person, hee misliked not his worke. And if hee had, *Scipio Nasica*, judged by common consent the best Romaine, loved him. Both the other *Scipio* Brothers, who had by their vertues no lesse surnames then of *Asia* and

[12] *being*, and *first substance*,—philosophical terms. [13] *i.e.*, Cato the Elder.

Affrick, so loved him that they caused his body to be buried in their Sepulcher. So as *Cato*, his authoritie being but against his person, and that aunswered with so farre greater then himselfe, is heerein of no validitie. But now indeede my burthen is great; now *Plato* his name is layde upon mee, whom I must confesse, of all Philosophers, I have ever esteemed most worthy of reverence, and with great reason: Sith of all Philosophers, he is the most poeticall. Yet if he will defile the Fountaine, out of which his flowing streames have proceeded, let us boldly examine with what reasons hee did it. First truly, a man might maliciously object that *Plato*, being a Philosopher, was a naturall enemie of Poets: for indeede, after the Philosophers had picked out of the sweete mysteries of Poetrie the right discerning true points of knowledge, they forthwith, putting it in method, and making a Schoole-arte of that which the Poets did onely teach by a divine delightfulnes, beginning to spurne at their guides, like ungrateful Prentises, were not content to set up shops for themselves, but sought by all meanes to discredit their maisters. Which by the force of delight beeing barred them, the lesse they could overthrow them, the more they hated them. For indeede, they found for *Homer*, seaven Cities strove who should have him for their citizen; where many Citties banished Philosophers, as not fitte members to live among them. For onely repeating certaine of *Euripides* verses, many *Athenians* had their lyves saved of the *Siracusians:* when the *Athenians* themselves thought many Philosophers unwoorthie to live.

Certaine Poets, as *Simonides*, and *Pindarus*, had so prevailed with *Hiero* the first, that of a Tirant they made him a just King, where *Plato* could do so little with *Dionisius*, that he himselfe, of a Philosopher, was made a slave. But who should doe thus, I confesse, should requite the objections made against Poets, with like cavillation against Philosophers, as likewise one should doe, that should bid one read *Phædrus*, or *Symposium* in *Plato*, or the discourse of love in *Plutarch*, and see whether any Poet doe authorize abominable filthines, as they doe. . . . But I honor philo-

sophicall instructions, and blesse the wits which bred them: so as they be not abused, which is likewise stretched to Poetrie.

S. *Paule* himselfe, (who yet for the credite of Poets alledgeth twise two Poets, and one of them by the name of a Prophet) setteth a watch-word upon Philosophy, indeede upon the abuse. So dooth *Plato*, upon the abuse, not upon Poetrie. *Plato* found fault that the Poets of his time filled the worlde with wrong opinions of the Gods, making light tales of that unspotted essence; and therefore, would not have the youth depraved with such opinions. Heerin may much be said, let this suffice: the Poets did not induce such opinions, but dyd imitate those opinions already induced. For all the Greek stories can well testifie that the very religion of that time, stoode upon many, and many-fashioned Gods, not taught so by the Poets, but followed, according to their nature of imitation. Who list may reade in *Plutarch* the discourses of *Isis*, and *Osiris*, of the cause why Oracles ceased, of the divine providence: and see, whether the Theologie of that nation stood not upon such dreames, which the Poets indeed supersticiously observed, and truly, (sith they had not the light of Christ,) did much better in it then the Philosophers, who, shaking off superstition, brought in Atheisme. *Plato* therefore, (whose authoritie I had much rather justly conster,[14] then unjustly resist,) meant not in general of Poets, in those words of which *Julius Scaliger* saith *Qua authoritate, barbari quidam, atque hispidi, abuti velint, ad Poetas é republica exigendos:*[15] but only meant, to drive out those wrong opinions of the Deitie (whereof now, without further law, Christianity hath taken away all the hurtful beliefe,) perchance (as he thought) norished by the then esteemed Poets. And a man need goe no further then to Plato himselfe, to know his meaning: who in his Dialogue called *Ion*, giveth high, and rightly divine commendation to Poetrie. So as *Plato*, banishing the abuse, not the thing, not banishing it, but giving due honor unto it, shall be

[14] construe.

[15] *Which authority certain barbarous and rude persons wish to abuse in order to drive poets out of the republic.*

our Patron, and not our adversarie. For indeed I had much rather, (sith truly I may doe it) shew theyr mistaking of *Plato*, (under whose Lyons skin they would make an Asse-like braying against Poesie,) then goe about to overthrow his authority, whom the wiser a man is, the more just cause he shall find to have in admiration: especially, sith he attributeth unto Poesie more then my selfe doe; namely, to be a very inspiring of a divine force, farre above mans wit; as in the aforenamed Dialogue is apparent.

Of the other side, who would shew the honors, have been by the best sort of judgments granted them, a whole Sea of examples woulde present themselves.[16] *Alexanders*, *Cæsars*, *Scipios*, all favorers of Poets. *Lelius*, called the Romane *Socrates*, himselfe a Poet: so as part of *Heautontimorumenon* in *Terence*, was supposed to be made by him. And even the Greek *Socrates*, whom *Apollo* confirmed to be the onely wise man, is sayde to have spent part of his old tyme in putting *Esops* fables into verses. And therefore, full evill should it become his scholler *Plato* to put such words in his Maisters mouth against Poets. But what need more? *Aristotle* writes the Arte of Poesie: and why if it should not be written? *Plutarch* teacheth the use to be gathered of them, and how if they should not be read? And who reades *Plutarchs* eyther historie or philosophy, shall finde hee trymmeth both theyr garments with gards of Poesie. But I list not to defend Poesie with the helpe of her underling, Historiography. Let it suffise that it is a fit soyle for prayse to dwell upon: and what dispraise may set upon it, is eyther easily over-come, or transformed into just commendation. So that, sith the excellencies of it may be so easily, and so justly confirmed, and the low-creeping objections, soone trodden downe; it not being an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine: not of effeminatenes, but of notable stirring of courage: not of abusing mans witte, but of strengthning mans wit: not banished, but honored by *Plato:* let us rather plant more Laurels,

[16] Construction confused by omission of antecedent of *who* (*to those*) and subject of *have been* (*that*). Elizabethan, and even later, writers, played sad havoc with relative constructions.

for to engarland our Poets heads, (which honor of beeing laureat, as besides them, onely tryumphant Captaines weare, is a sufficient authority to shewe the price they ought to be had in,) then suffer the ill-favouring breath of such wrong-speakers once to blowe upon the cleere springs of Poesie.

But sith I have runne so long a careere in this matter, me thinks, before I give my penne a fulle stop, it shalbe but a little more lost time to inquire why England (the Mother of excellent mindes,) should bee growne so hard a step-mother to Poets, who certainly in wit ought to passe all other: sith all onely proceedeth from their wit, being indeede makers of themselves, not takers of others. How can I but exclaime,

Musa, mihi causas memora, quo numine læso.[17]

Sweete Poesie, that hath aunciently had Kings, Emperors, Senators, great Captaines, such as besides a thousand others, *David*, *Adrian*, *Sophocles*, *Germanicus*, not onely to favour poets, but to be Poets. And of our neerer times, can present for her Patrons, a *Robert*, king of Sicil, the great king *Francis* of France, King *James* of Scotland. Such Cardinals as *Bembus*, and *Bibiena*. Such famous Preachers and Teachers, as *Beza* and *Melancthon*. So learned Philosophers, as *Fracastorius* and *Scaliger*. So great Orators, as *Pontanus* and *Muretus*. So piercing wits, as *George Buchanan*. So grave Counsellors, as besides many, but before all, that *Hospitall* of Fraunce: than whom, (I thinke) that Realme never brought forth a more accomplished judgement, more firmely builded upon vertue. I say these, with numbers of others, not onely to read others Poesies, but to poetise for others reading, that Poesie thus embraced in all other places, should onely finde in our time a hard welcome in England, I thinke the very earth lamenteth it, and therefore decketh our Soyle with fewer Laurels then it was accustomed. For heertofore, Poets have in England also florished. And which is to be noted, even in those times

[17] *O Muse, tell me the causes by what offended deity,* etc. — VIRGIL, *Æneid*, I. 8.

when the trumpet of *Mars* did sounde loudest. And now that an over-faint quietnes should seeme to strew the house for Poets, they are almost in as good reputation as the *Mountibancks* at *Venice*. Truly even that, as of the one side it giveth great praise to Poesie, which like *Venus*, (but to better purpose) hath rather be troubled in the net with *Mars*, then enjoy the homelie quiet of *Vulcan:* so serves it for a peece of a reason, why they are lesse gratefull to idle England, which nowe can scarce endure the payne of a pen. Upon this necessarily followeth that base men with servile wits undertake it: who think it inough, if they can be rewarded of the Printer. And so as *Epaminondas* is sayd, with the honor of his vertue, to have made an office, by his exercising it, which before was contemptible, to become highly respected: so these, no more but setting their names to it, by their owne disgracefulnes, disgrace the most gracefull Poesie. For now, . . . without any commission, they doe poste over the banckes of *Helicon* tyll they make the readers more weary than Poste-horses: while in the mean tyme, they

Queis meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan,[18]

are better content to suppresse the outflowing[19] of their wit, then by publishing them to bee accounted Knights of the same order. But I, that before ever I durst aspire unto the dignitie, am admitted into the company of the Paper-blurers, doe finde the very true cause of our wanting estimation, is want of desert: taking upon us to be Poets in despight of *Pallas*. Nowe, wherein we want desert, were a thanke-worthy labour to expresse: but if I knew, I should have mended my selfe. But I, as I never desired the title, so have I neglected the meanes to come by it. Onely overmastered by some thoughts, I yeelded an inckie tribute unto them. Mary, they that delight in Poesie it selfe, should seeke to knowe what they doe, and how they doe; and especially looke themselves in an unflattering Glasse of reason, if they bee inclinable

[18] *Whose hearts Titan has formed out of better clay.* — JUVENAL, XIV. 34.
[19] outflowings?

unto it. For Poesie must not be drawne by the eares, it must bee gently led, or rather it must lead. Which was partly the cause that made the auncient learned affirme it was a divine gift, and no humaine skill: sith all other knowledges lie ready for any that hath strength of witte: A Poet, no industrie can make, if his owne *Genius* bee not carried unto it: and therefore is it an old Proverbe, *Orator fit; Poeta nascitur.*[20] Yet confesse I alwayes that as the firtilest ground must bee manured, so must the highest flying wit have a *Dedalus* to guide him. That *Dedalus*, they say, both in this, and in other, hath three wings, to beare it selfe up into the ayre of due commendation: that is, Arte, Imitation, and Exercise. But these, neyther artificiall rules, nor imitative patternes, we much cumber our selves withall. Exercise indeede wee doe, but that very fore-backwardly: for where we should exercise to know, wee exercise as having knowne: and so is oure braine delivered of much matter, which never was begotten by knowledge. For, there being two principal parts, matter to be expressed by wordes, and words to expresse the matter, in neyther wee use Arte, or Imitation, rightly. Our matter is *Quodlibit*[21] indeed, though wrongly perfourming *Ovids* verse.

(*Quicquid conabar dicere versus erit* [*erat?*]:)[22]

never marshalling it into an assured rancke, that almost the readers cannot tell where to finde themselves.

Chaucer undoubtedly did excellently in hys *Troylus* and *Cresseid;* of whom truly I know not whether to mervaile more, either that he in that mistie time could see so clearely, or that wee in this cleare age walke so stumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fitte to be forgiven, in so reverent antiquity. I account the *Mirrour of Magistrates* meetely furnished of beautiful parts; and in the Earl of Surries *Liricks* many things tasting of a noble

[20] *An orator is made; a poet is born.* [21] *anything you please.*

[22] *Whatever I attempted to utter will be* [*was*] *verse.* After Ovid, *Tristia*, IV. 10. 20: *Et quod tentabam dicere versus erat*, And what I tried to say was verse.

birth, and worthy of a noble minde. The *Sheapheards Kalender* hath much Poetrie in his Eglogues: indeede worthy the reading if I be not deceived. That same framing of his stile to an old rustick language, I dare not allowe, sith neyther *Theocritus* in Greeke, *Virgill* in Latine, nor *Sanazar* in Italian, did affect it. Besides these, doe I not remember to have seene but fewe, (to speake boldely) printed, that have poeticall sinnewes in them: for proofe whereof, let but most of the verses bee put in Prose, and then aske the meaning; and it will be found that one verse did but beget another, without ordering at the first what should be at the last: which becomes a confused masse of words, with a tingling sound of ryme, barely accompanied with reason.

Our Tragedies and Comedies, (not without cause cried out against,) observing rules, neyther of honest civilitie, nor of skilfull Poetrie, excepting *Gorboduck*, (againe, I say, of those that I have seene), which notwithstanding, as it is full of stately speeches, and well sounding Phrases, clyming to the height of *Seneca* his stile, and as full of notable moralitie, which it doth most delightfully teach, and so obtayne the very end of Poesie: yet in troth it is very defectious in the circumstaunces,[23] which greeveth mee, because it might not remaine as an exact model of all Tragedies. For it is faulty both in place, and time, the two necessary companions of all corporall actions. For where the stage should alwaies represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by *Aristotles* precept and common reason, but one day: there is both many dayes, and many places, inartificially imagined. But if it be so in *Gorboduck*, how much more in al the rest? where you shall have *Asia* of the one side, and *Affrick* of the other, and so many other under-kingdoms, that the Player, when he commeth in, must ever begin with telling you where he is: or els the tale wil not be conceived. Now ye shal have three Ladies walke to gather flowers, and then we must beleeve the stage to be a Garden. By and by we heare newes of shipwracke

[23] defective in particulars.

in the same place, and then wee are to blame if we accept it not for a rock.

Upon the backe of that, comes out a hidious Monster, with fire and smoke, and then the miserable beholders are bounde to take it for a Cave. While in the mean-time two Armies flye in, represented with foure swords and bucklers, and then what harde heart will not receive it for a pitched fielde? Now, of time they are much more liberall, . . . which how absurd it is in sence, even sence may imagine, and Arte hath taught, and all auncient examples justified: and at this day, the ordinary Players in Italie wil not erre in. Yet wil some bring in an example of *Eunuchus* in *Terence*, that containeth matter of two dayes, yet far short of twenty yeeres. True it is, and so was it to be playd in two daies, and so fitted to the time it set forth. And though *Plautus* hath in one place done amisse, let us hit with him, and not misse with him. But they wil say, how then shal we set forth a story, which containeth both many places, and many times? And doe they not knowe that a Tragedie is tied to the lawes of Poesie, and not of Historie? not bound to follow the storie, but having liberty, either to faine a quite newe matter, or to frame the historie to the most tragicall conveniencie. Againe, many things may be told, which cannot be shewed, if they knowe the difference betwixt reporting and representing. As for example, I may speake, (though I am heere) of *Peru*, and in speech, digresse from that, to the description of *Calicut:* but in action, I cannot represent it without *Pacolets* horse[24]: and so was the manner the Auncients tooke, by some *Nuncius*,[25] to recount thinges done in former time, or other place. Lastly, if they wil represent an history, they must not (as *Horace* saith) beginne *Ab ovo:*[26] but they must come to the principall poynt of that one action, which they wil represent. By example this wil be best expressed. I have a story of young *Polidorus*, delivered for safeties sake, with great riches, by his Father

[24] See Wheeler's Vocabulary, in Appendix to Webster's Dictionary.
[25] messenger. [26] From the egg.

Priamus to *Polimnestor* king of *Thrace*, in the Troyan war time: Hee after some yeeres, hearing the overthrowe of *Priamus*, for to make the treasure his owne, murthereth the child: the body of the child is taken up. *Hecuba*, shee the same day, findeth a slight to bee revenged most cruelly of the Tyrant: where nowe would one of our Tragedy writers begin, but with the delivery of the childe? Then should he sayle over into *Thrace*, and so spend I know not how many yeeres, and travaile numbers of places. But where dooth *Euripides?* Even with the finding of the body, leaving the rest to be tolde by the spirit of *Polidorus*. This need no further to be inlarged, the dullest wit may conceive it. But besides these grosse absurdities, how all theyr Playes be neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies: mingling Kings and Clownes, not because the matter so carrieth it: but thrust in Clownes by head and shoulders, to play a part in majesticall matters, with neither decencie nor discretion. So as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulnes, is by their mungrell Tragy-comedie obtained. I know *Apuleius* did some-what so, but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I knowe the Auncients have one or two examples of Tragy-comedies, as *Plautus* hath *Amphitrio:* but if we marke them well, we shall find that they never, or very daintily, match Horn-pypes and Funeralls. So falleth it out, that having indeed no right Comedy, in that comicall part of our Tragedy, we have nothing but scurrility, unwoorthy of any chaste eares: or some extreame shew of doltishnes, indeed fit to lift up a loude laughter, and nothing els: where the whole tract of a Comedy shoulde be full of delight, as the Tragedy shoulde be still maintained, in a well raised admiration. But our Comedians thinke there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet commeth it not of delight: as though delight should be the cause of laughter, but well may one thing breed both together: nay, rather in themselves, they have as it were, a kind of contrarietie: for delight we scarcely doe, but in things that have a conveniencie to our selves, or to the generall

nature: laughter almost ever commeth of things most disproportioned to our selves and nature. Delight hath a joy in it, either permanent, or present. Laughter hath onely a scornful tickling.

For example, we are ravished with delight to see a faire woman, and yet are far from being moved to laughter. We laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainely we cannot delight. We delight in good chaunces, we laugh at mischaunces; we delight to heare the happines of our friends, or Country; at which he were worthy to be laughed at that would laugh; wee shall contrarily laugh sometimes, to finde a matter quite mistaken, and goe downe the hill agaynst the byas, in the mouth of some such men as for the respect of them, one shalbe hartely sorry, yet he cannot chuse but laugh; and so is rather pained, then delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not but that they may goe well together, for as in *Alexanders* picture well set out, wee delight without laughter, and in twenty mad Anticks we laugh without delight: so in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard, and furious countenance, in womans attire, spinning at *Omphales* commaundement, it breedeth both delight and laughter. For the representing of so strange a power in love, procureth delight: and the scornefulnes of the action, stirreth laughter. But I speake to this purpose, that all the end of the comicall part bee not upon such scornefull matters as stirreth laughter onely: but mixt with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of Poesie. And the great fault even in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainely by *Aristotle*, is that they styrre laughter in sinfull things; which are rather execrable then ridiculous: or in miserable, which are rather to be pittied than scorned. For what is it to make folkes gape at a wretched Begger, or a beggerly Clowne? or against lawe of hospitality, to jest at straungers, because they speake not English so well as wee doe? what do we learne, sith it is certaine

(*Nil habet infœlix paupertas durius in se,*
Quam quod ridiculos homines facit.)[27]

[27] *Unhappy poverty has in itself nothing more disagreeable than that it makes men ridiculous.* — JUVENAL, III. 152–3.

But rather a busy loving Courtier, a hartles threatening *Thraso*. A selfe-wise-seeming schoolemaster. A awry-transformed Traveller. These, if we sawe walke in stage names, which wee play naturally, therein were delightfull laughter, and teaching delightfulnes: as in the other, the Tragedies of *Buchanan* doe justly bring forth a divine admiration. But I have lavished out too many wordes of this play matter. I doe it because as they are excelling parts of Poesie, so is there none so much used in England, and none can be more pittifully abused. Which like an unmannerly Daughter, shewing a bad education, causeth her mother Poesies honesty to bee called in question. Other sorts of Poetry almost have we none, but that Lyricall kind of Songs and Sonnets: which, Lord, if he gave us so goode mindes, how well it might be imployed, and with howe heavenly fruite, both private and publique, in singing the prayses of the immortall beauty: the immortall goodnes of that God who gyveth us hands to write, and wits to conceive, of which we might well want words, but never matter, of which we could turne our eies to nothing, but we should ever have new budding occasions. But truely many of such writings as come under the banner of unresistable love, if I were a Mistres, would never perswade mee they were in love: so coldely they apply fiery speeches, as men that had rather red Lovers writings; and so caught up certaine swelling phrases, which hang together, like a man which once tolde mee, the winde was at North, West, and by South, because he would be sure to name windes enowe: then that in truth they feele those passions, which easily (as I think) may be bewrayed, by that same forciblenes, or *Energia*, (as the Greekes cal it) of the writer. But let this bee a sufficient, though short note, that wee misse the right use of the materiall point of Poesie.

Now, for the out-side of it, which is words, or (as I may tearme it) *Diction*, it is even well worse. So is that honny-flowing Matron Eloquence, apparelled, or rather disguised, in a Curtizan-like painted affectation: one time with so farre fette[28] words they may seeme

[28] fetched.

Monsters: but must seeme straungers to any poore English man. Another tyme, with coursing of a Letter, as if they were bound to followe the method of a Dictionary: an other tyme, with figures and flowers, extreamelie winter-starved. But I would this fault were only peculiar to Versifiers, and had not as large possession among Prose-printers; and, (which is to be mervailed) among many Schollers; and, (which is to be pittied) among some Preachers. Truly I could wish, if at least I might be so bold, to wish in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity, the diligent imitators of *Tullie*, and *Demosthenes*, (most worthy to be imitated) did not so much keep *Nizolian* Paper-bookes of their figures and phrases, as by attentive translation (as it were) devoure them whole, and make them wholly theirs: For nowe they cast Sugar and Spice upon every dish that is served to the table; Like those Indians, not content to weare eare-rings at the fit and naturall place of the eares, but they will thrust Jewels through their nose, and lippes, because they will be sure to be fine.

Tullie, when he was to drive out *Cateline*, as it were with a Thunder-bolt of eloquence, often used that figure of repitition, *Vivit? vivit? imo Senatum venit &c.*[29] Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, hee would have his words (as it were) double out of his mouth: and so doe that artificially, which we see men doe in choller naturally. And wee, having noted the grace of those words, hale[30] them in sometime to a familier Epistle, when it were to too much choller to be chollerick. Now for similitudes, in certaine printed discourses, I thinke all Herbarists, all stories of Beasts, Foules, and Fishes, are rifled up, that they come in multitudes to waite upon any of our conceits; which certainly is as absurd a surfet to the eares as is possible: for the force of a similitude, not being to proove anything to a contrary Disputer, but onely to explane to a willing hearer, when that is done, the rest is a most tedious prattling: rather over-swaying the memory from the purpose whereto they were applyed, then any whit in-

[29] *Does he live? does he live? yea, he comes to the Senate*, etc. — CICERO, *Catiline*, I. 1, 2.

[30] haul, drag.

forming the judgement, already eyther satis-fied, or by similitudes not to be satis-fied. For my part, I doe not doubt, when *Antonius* and *Crassus*, the great forefathers of *Cicero* in eloquence, the one (as *Cicero* testifieth of them) pretended not to know Arte, the other, not to set by it: because with a playne sensiblenes, they might win credit of popular eares; which credit is the nearest step to perswasion: which perswasion is the chiefe marke of Oratory; I doe not doubt (I say) but that they used these tracks very sparingly, which who doth generally use, any man may see doth daunce to his owne musick: and so be noted by the audience, more careful to speake curiously, then to speake truly.

Undoubtedly, (at least to my opinion undoubtedly,) I have found in divers smally learned Courtiers a more sounde stile, then in some professors of learning: of which I can gesse no other cause, but that the Courtier following that which by practise hee findeth fittest to nature, therein, (though he know it not,) doth according to Art, though not by Art: where the other, using Art to shew Art, and not to hide Art, (as in these cases he should doe) flyeth from nature, and indeede abuseth Art.

But what? me thinkes I deserve to be pounded for straying from Poetrie to Oratorie: but both have such an affinity in this wordish consideration, that I thinke this digression will make my meaning receive the fuller understanding: which is not to take upon me to teach Poets howe they should doe, but onely finding my selfe sick among the rest, to shewe some one or two spots of the common infection, growne among the most part of Writers: that acknowledging our selves somewhat awry, we may bend to the right use both of matter and manner; whereto our language gyveth us great occasion, beeing indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it. I know, some will say it is a mingled language. And why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say it wanteth Grammer. Nay truly, it hath that prayse, that it wanteth not Grammer: for Grammer it might have, but it needes it not; beeing so easie of it selfe, and so voyd of those cumbersome differences of Cases, Genders,

Moodes, and Tenses, which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of *Babilons* curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother-tongue. But for the uttering sweetly and properly the conceits of the minde, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world: and is particulerly happy in compositions of two or three words together, neere the Greeke, far beyond the Latine: which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

Now, of versifying there are two sorts, the one Auncient, the other Moderne: the Auncient marked the quantitie of each silable, and according to that framed his verse: the Moderne, observing onely number, (with some regarde of the accent,) the chiefe life of it standeth in that lyke sounding of the words, which wee call Ryme. Whether of these be the most excellent, would beare many speeches. The Auncient, (no doubt) more fit for Musick, both words and tune observing quantity, and more fit lively to expresse divers passions by the low and lofty sounde of the well-weyed silable. The latter likewise, with hys Ryme, striketh a certaine musick to the eare: and in fine, sith it dooth delight, though by another way, it obtaines the same purpose: there beeing in eyther sweetnes, and wanting in neither majestie. Truely the English, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both sorts: for, for the Ancient, the Italian is so full of Vowels that it must ever be cumbred with *Elisions*. The Dutch, so of the other side with Consonants, that they cannot yeeld the sweet slyding fit for a Verse. The French, in his whole language, hath not one word that hath his accent in the last silable saving two, called *Antepenultima*, and little more hath the Spanish: and therefore very gracelesly may they use *Dactiles*. The English is subject to none of these defects.

Nowe, for the ryme, though wee doe not observe quantitie, yet wee observe the accent very precisely: which other languages eyther cannot doe, or will not doe so absolutely. That *Cæsura*, or breathing place in the middest of the verse, neither Italian nor Spanish have, the French, and we, never almost fayle of. Lastly,

even the very ryme it selfe, the Italian cannot put in the last silable, by the French named the Masculine ryme, but still in the next to the last, which the French call the Female; or the next before that, which the Italians terme *Sdrucciola*.[31] The example of the former is *Buono, Suono*, of the *Sdrucciola, Femina, Semina*. The French, of the other side, hath both the Male, as *Bon, Son*, and the Female, as *Plaise, Taise*. But the *Sdrucciola*, hee hath not: where the English hath all three, as *Due, True, Father, Rather, Motion, Potion;*[32] with much more which might be sayd, but that I finde already the triflingnes of this discourse is much too much enlarged. So that sith the ever-praise-worthy Poesie is full of vertue-breeding delightfulnes, and voyde of no gyfte that ought to be in the noble name of learning: sith the blames laid against it are either false, or feeble: sith the cause why it is not esteemed in Englande, is the fault of Poet-apes, not Poets: sith lastly, our tongue is most fit to honor Poesie, and to bee honored by Poesie, I conjure you all, that have had the evill-lucke to reade this incke-wasting toy of mine, even in the name of the nyne Muses, no more to scorn the sacred misteries of Poesie: no more to laugh at the name of Poets, as though they were next inheritours to Fooles: no more to jest at the reverent title of a Rymer: but to beleeve with *Aristotle*, that they were the auncient Treasurers of the Græcians Divinity. To beleeve with *Bembus*, that they were first bringers in of all civilitie. To beleeve with *Scaliger*, that no Philosophers precepts can sooner make you an honest man, then the reading of *Virgill*. To beleeve with *Clauserus*, the Translator of *Cornutus*, that it pleased the heavenly Deitie, by *Hesiod* and *Homer*, under the vayle of fables, to give us all knowledge, Logick, Rethorick, Philosophy, naturall, and morall; and *Quid non?*[33] To beleeve with me, that there are many misteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpose were written darkely, least by prophane wits it should bee abused. To beleeve with *Landin*, that they are so beloved of the Gods that

[31] gliding. [32] Pronounced as trisyllables, as in Shakspere. [33] *What not?*

whatsoever they write proceeds of a divine fury. Lastly, to beleeve themselves, when they tell you they will make you immortall by their verses.

Thus doing, your name shall flourish in the Printers shoppes; thus doing, you shall bee of kinne to many a poeticall Preface; thus doing, you shall bee most fayre, most ritch, most wise, most all, you shall dwell upon Superlatives. Thus dooing, though you be *Libertino patre natus*,[34] you shall suddenly grow *Hercules* [*Herculis?*] *proles*:[35]

Si quid mea carmina possunt.[36]

Thus doing, your soule shal be placed with *Dantes Beatrix*, or *Virgils Anchises*. But if, (fie of such a but) you be borne so neere the dull making *Cataphract* of *Nilus*, that you cannot heare the Plannet-like Musick of Poetrie, if you have so earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift it selfe up to looke to the sky of Poetry: or rather, by a certaine rusticall disdaine, will become such a Mome,[37] as to be a *Momus* of Poetry: then, though I will not wish unto you the Asses eares of *Midas*, nor to bee driven by a Poets verses, (as *Bubonax* was) to hang himselfe, nor to be rimed to death, as is said to be doone in Ireland: yet thus much curse I must send you, in the behalfe of all Poets, that while you live, you live in love, and never get favour, for lacking skill of a *Sonnet:* and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an *Epitaph*.

[34] *Born of a freedman father.*
[35] *The offspring of Hercules.*
[36] *If my songs avail.*
[37] a dull, stupid person.

III.

RICHARD HOOKER.

(1553-4—1600.)

OF THE LAWS OF ECCLESIASTICAL POLITY. (*BOOK I.*)

[Written about 1590.]

X. That which hitherto we have set down is (I hope) sufficient to shew their brutishness, which imagine that religion and virtue are only as men will account of them; that we might make as much account, if we would, of the contrary, without any harm unto ourselves, and that in nature they are as indifferent one as the other. We see then how nature itself teacheth laws and statutes to live by. The laws which have been hitherto mentioned do bind men absolutely even as they are men, although they have never any settled fellowship, never any solemn agreement amongst themselves what to do or not to do. But forasmuch as we are not by ourselves sufficient to furnish ourselves with competent store of things needful for such a life as our nature doth desire, a life fit for the dignity of man; therefore to supply those defects and imperfections which are in us living single and solely by ourselves, we are naturally induced to seek communion and fellowship with others. This was the cause of men's uniting themselves at the first in politic[1] societies; which societies could not be without government, nor government without a distinct kind of law from that which hath been already declared. Two foundations there

How reason doth lead men unto the making of human laws whereby politic societies are governed; and to agreement about laws whereby the fellowship or communion of independent societies standeth.

[1] political.

are which bear up public societies; the one, a natural inclination, whereby all men desire sociable life and fellowship; the other, an order expressly or secretly agreed upon touching the manner of their union in living together. The latter is that which we call the law of a commonweal, the very soul of a politic body, the parts whereof are by law animated, held together, and set on work in such actions as the common good requireth. Laws politic, ordained for external order and regiment[2] amongst men, are never framed as they should be, unless presuming the will of man to be inwardly obstinate, rebellious, and averse from all obedience unto the sacred laws of his nature; in a word, unless presuming man to be in regard of his depraved mind little better than a wild beast, they do accordingly provide notwithstanding so to frame his outward actions, that they be no hindrance unto the common good for which societies are instituted: unless they do this, they are not perfect. It resteth therefore that we consider how nature findeth out such laws of government as serve to direct even nature depraved to a right end.

[2] All men desire to lead in this world a happy life. That life is led most happily, wherein all virtue is exercised without impediment or let. The Apostle, in exhorting men to contentment although they have in this world no more than very bare food and raiment, giveth us thereby to understand that those are even the lowest of things necessary; that if we should be stripped of all those things without which we might possibly be, yet these must be left; that destitution in these is such an impediment, as till it be removed suffereth not the mind of man to admit any other care. For this cause, first God assigned Adam maintenance of life, and then appointed him a law to observe. For this cause, after men began to grow to a number, the first thing we read they gave themselves unto was the tilling of the earth and the feeding of cattle. Having by this mean whereon to live, the principal actions of their life afterward are noted by the exercise of their

[2] government.

religion. True it is, that the kingdom of God must be the first thing in our purposes and desires. But inasmuch as righteous life presupposeth life; inasmuch as to live virtuously it is impossible except we live; therefore the first impediment, which naturally we endeavour to remove, is penury and want of things without which we cannot live. Unto life many implements[3] are necessary; moe, if we seek (as all men naturally do) such a life as hath in it joy, comfort, delight, and pleasure. To this end we see how quickly sundry arts mechanical were found out, in the very prime of the world. As things of greatest necessity are always first provided for, so things of greatest dignity are most accounted of by all such as judge rightly. Although therefore riches be a thing which every man wisheth, yet no man of judgment can esteem it better to be rich, than wise, virtuous, and religious. If we be both or either of these, it is not because we are so born. For into the world we come as empty of the one as of the other, as naked in mind as we are in body. Both which necessities of man had at the first no other helps and supplies than only domestical; such as that which the Prophet implieth, saying, *Can a mother forget her child?*[4] such as that which the Apostle mentioneth, saying, *He that careth not for his own is worse than an Infidel;*[5] such as that concerning Abraham, *Abraham will command his sons and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord.*[6]

[3] But neither that which we learn of ourselves nor that which others teach us can prevail, where wickedness and malice have taken deep root. If therefore when there was but as yet one only family in the world, no means of instruction human or divine could prevent effusion of blood; how could it be chosen but that when families were multiplied and increased upon earth, after separation each providing for itself, envy, strife, contention, and violence must grow amongst them? For hath not nature furnished man with wit and valour, as it were with armour, which may be used as well unto extreme evil as good? Yea, were they

[3] accessories. [4] Isa. xlix. 15. [5] 1 Tim. v. 8. [6] Gen. xviii. 19.

not used by the rest of the world unto evil; unto the contrary only by Seth, Enoch, and those few the rest in that line? We all make complaint of the iniquity of our times: not unjustly; for the days are evil. But compare them with those times wherein there were no civil societies, with those times wherein there was as yet no manner of public regiment established, with those times wherein there were not above eight persons righteous living upon the face of the earth; and we have surely good cause to think that God hath blessed us exceedingly, and hath made us behold most happy days.

[4] To take away all such mutual grievances, injuries, and wrongs, there was no way but only by growing unto composition and agreement amongst themselves, by ordaining some kind of government public, and by yielding themselves subject thereunto; that unto whom they granted authority to rule and govern, by them the peace, tranquillity, and happy estate of the rest might be procured. Men always knew that when force and injury was[7] offered they might be defenders of themselves; they knew that howsoever men may seek their own commodity,[8] yet if this were done with injury unto others it was not to be suffered, but by all men and by all good means to be withstood; finally they knew that no man might in reason take upon him to determine his own right, and according to his own determination proceed in maintenance thereof, inasmuch as every man is towards himself and them whom he greatly affecteth partial; and therefore that strifes and troubles would be endless, except they gave their common consent all to be ordered by some whom they should agree upon: without which consent there was no reason that one man should take upon him to be lord or judge over another; because, although there be according to the opinion of some very great and judicious men a kind of natural right in the noble, wise, and virtuous, to govern them which are of servile disposition; nevertheless for manifestation of this their right, and men's more peaceable con-

[7] Subjects connected by *and* with singular verb, as often. [8] advantage.

tention on both sides, the assent of them who are to be governed seemeth necessary.

To fathers within their private families nature hath given a supreme power; for which cause we see throughout the world even from the foundation thereof, all men have ever been taken as lords and lawful kings in their own houses. Howbeit over a whole grand multitude having no such dependency upon any one, and consisting of so many families as every politic society in the world doth, impossible it is that any should have complete lawful power, but by consent of men, or immediate appointment of God; because not having the natural superiority of fathers, their power must needs be either usurped, and then unlawful; or, if lawful, then either granted or consented unto by them over whom they exercise the same, or else given extraordinarily from God, unto whom all the world is subject. It is no improbable opinion therefore which the Arch-philosopher[9] was of, that as the chiefest person in every household was always as it were a king, so when numbers of households joined themselves in civil society together, kings were the first kind of governors amongst them. Which is also (as it seemeth) the reason why the name of *Father* continued still in them, who of fathers were made rulers; as also the ancient custom of governors to do as Melchisedec, and being kings to exercise the office of priests, which fathers did at the first, grew perhaps by the same occasion.

Howbeit not this[10] the only kind of regiment that hath been received in the world. The inconveniences of one kind have caused sundry other to be devised. So that in a word all public regiment of what kind soever seemeth evidently to have risen from deliberate advice, consultation, and composition between men, judging it convenient and behoveful; there being no impossibility in nature considered by itself, but that men might have lived without any public regiment. Howbeit, the corruption of our nature being presupposed, we may not deny but that the law of nature

[9] Aristotle.

[10] Substantive verb omitted.

doth now require of necessity some kind of regiment; so that to bring things unto the first course they were in, and utterly to take away all kind of public government in the world, were apparently to overturn the whole world.

[5] The case of man's nature standing therefore as it doth, some kind of regiment the law of nature doth require; yet the kinds thereof being many, nature tieth not to any one, but leaveth the choice as a thing arbitrary. At the first when some certain kind of regiment was once approved, it may be that nothing was then further thought upon for the manner of governing, but all permitted unto their wisdom and discretion which were to rule; till by experience they found this for all parts very inconvenient, so as the thing which they had devised for a remedy did indeed but increase the sore which it should have cured. They saw that to live by one man's will became the cause of all men's misery. This constrained them to come unto laws, wherein all men might see their duties beforehand, and know the penalties of transgressing them. If things be simply good or evil, and withal universally so acknowledged, there needs no new law to be made for such things. The first kind therefore of things appointed by laws human containeth whatsoever being in itself naturally good or evil, is notwithstanding more secret than that it can be discerned by every man's present conceit, without some deeper discourse and judgment. In which discourse because there is difficulty and possibility many ways to err, unless such things were set down by laws, many would be ignorant of their duties which now are not, and many that know what they should do would nevertheless dissemble it, and to excuse themselves pretend ignorance and simplicity, which now they cannot.

[6] And because the greatest part of men are such as prefer their own private good before all things, even that good which is sensual, before whatsoever is most divine; and for that the labour of doing good, together with the pleasure arising from the contrary, doth make men for the most part slower to the one and proner to the other, than that duty prescribed them by law

can prevail sufficiently with them: therefore unto laws that men do make for the benefit of men it hath seemed always needful to add rewards, which may more allure unto good than any hardness deterreth from it, and punishments, which may more deter from evil, than any sweetness thereto allureth. Wherein as the generality[11] is natural, *Virtue rewardable and vice punishable;* so the particular determination of the reward or punishment belongeth unto them by whom laws are made. Theft is naturally punishable, but the kind of punishment is positive, and such lawful as men shall think with discretion convenient by law to appoint.

[7] In laws, that which is natural bindeth universally, that which is positive not so. To let go those kind[12] of positive laws which men impose upon themselves, as by vow unto God, contract with men, or such like; somewhat it will make unto our purpose, a little more fully to consider what things are incident into the making of the positive laws for the government of them that live united in public society. Laws do not only teach what is good, but they enjoin it, they have in them a certain constraining force. And to constrain men unto anything inconvenient doth seem unreasonable. Most requisite therefore it is that to devise laws which all men shall be forced to obey none but wise men be admitted. Laws are matters of principal consequence; men of common capacity and but ordinary judgment are not able (for how should they?) to discern what things are fittest for each kind and state of regiment. We cannot be ignorant how much our obedience unto laws dependeth upon this point. Let a man though never so justly oppose himself unto them that are disordered in their ways, and what one amongst them commonly doth not stomach at such contradiction, storm at reproof, and hate such as would reform them? Notwithstanding even they which brook it worst that men should tell them of their duties, when they are told the same by a law, think very well and reason-

[11] general proposition. [12] Common in Elizabethan English.

ably of it. For why? They presume that the law doth speak with all indifferency; that the law hath no side-respect to their persons; that the law is as it were an oracle proceeded from wisdom and understanding.

[8] Howbeit laws do not take their constraining force from the quality of such as devise them, but from that power which doth give them the strength of laws. That which we spake before concerning the power of government must here be applied unto the power of making laws whereby to govern; which power God hath over all: and by the natural law, whereunto he hath made all subject, the lawful power of making laws to command whole politic societies of men belongeth so properly unto the same entire societies, that for any prince or potentate of what kind soever upon earth to exercise the same of himself, and not either by express commission immediately and personally received from God, or else by authority derived at the first from their consent upon whose persons they impose laws, it is no better than mere tyranny.

Laws they are not therefore which public approbation hath not made so. But approbation not only they give who personally declare their assent by voice, sign, or act, but also when others do it in their names by right originally at the least derived from them. As in parliaments, councils, and the like assemblies, although we be not personally ourselves present, notwithstanding our assent is, by reason of others, agents there in our behalf. And what we do by others, no reason [13] but that it should stand as our deed, no less effectually to bind us than if ourselves had done it in person. In many things assent is given, they that give it not imagining they do so, because the manner of their assenting is not apparent. As for example, when an absolute monarch commandeth his subjects that which seemeth good in his own discretion, hath not his edict the force of a law whether they approve or dislike it? Again, that which hath been received long sithence [14]

[13] Substantive verb omitted. [14] since.

and is by custom now established, we keep as a law which we may not transgress; yet what consent was ever thereunto sought or required at our hands?

Of this point therefore we are to note, that sith [14] men naturally have no full and perfect power to command whole politic multitudes of men, therefore utterly without our consent we could in such sort be at no man's commandment living. And to be commanded we do consent, when that society whereof we are part hath at any time before consented, without revoking the same after by the like universal agreement. Wherefore as any man's deed past is good as long as himself continueth; so the act of a public society of men done five hundred years sithence standeth as theirs who presently are of the same societies, because corporations are immortal; we were then alive in our predecessors, and they in their successors do live still. Laws therefore human, of what kind soever, are available by consent.

[9] If here it be demanded how it cometh to pass that this being common unto all laws which are made, there should be found even in good laws so great a variety as there is; we must note the reason hereof to be the sundry particular ends, whereunto the different disposition of that subject or matter, for which laws are provided, causeth them to have especial respect in making laws. A law there is mentioned amongst the Grecians whereof Pittacus is reported to have been the author; and by that law it was agreed, that he which being overcome with drink did then strike any man, should suffer punishment double as much as if he had done the same being sober. No man could ever have thought this reasonable, that had intended thereby only to punish the injury committed according to the gravity of the fact: for who knoweth not that harm advisedly done is naturally less pardonable, and therefore worthy of the sharper punishment? But forasmuch as none did so usually this way offend as men in that case, which they wittingly fell into, even because they would be so much the more freely outrageous; it was for their public good, where such disorder was grown, to frame a positive law for remedy thereof

accordingly. To this appertain those known laws of making laws; as that law-makers must have an eye to the place where, and to the men amongst whom: that one kind of laws cannot serve for all kinds of regiment: that where the multitude beareth sway, laws that shall tend unto preservation of that state must make common smaller offices to go by lot, for fear of strife and division likely to arise, by reason that ordinary qualities sufficing for discharge of such offices, they could not but by many be desired, and so with danger contended for, and not missed without grudge and discontentment, whereas at an uncertain lot none can find themselves grieved, on whomsoever it lighteth; contrariwise the greatest, whereof but few are capable, to pass by popular election, that neither the people may envy such as have those honours, inasmuch as themselves bestow them, and that the chiefest may be kindled with desire to exercise all parts of rare and beneficial virtue, knowing they shall not lose their labour by growing in fame and estimation amongst the people: if the helm of chief government be in the hands of a few of the wealthiest, that then laws providing for continuance thereof must make the punishment of contumely and wrong offered unto any of the common sort sharp and grievous, that so the evil may be prevented whereby the rich are most likely to bring themselves into hatred with the people, who are not wont to take so great an offence when they are excluded from honours and offices, as when their persons are contumeliously trodden upon. In other kinds of regiment the like is observed concerning the difference of positive laws, which to be every where the same is impossible and against their nature.

[10] Now as the learned in the laws of this land observe, that our statutes sometimes are only the affirmation or ratification of that which by common law was held before; so here it is not to be omitted that generally all laws human, which are made for the ordering of politic societies, be either such as establish some duty whereunto all men by the law of reason did before stand bound; or else such as make that a duty now which before was none. The one sort we may for distinction's sake call *mixedly*, and the

other *merely* human. That which plain or necessary reason bindeth men unto may be in sundry considerations expedient to be ratified by human law. For example, if confusion of blood in marriage, the liberty of having many wives at once, or any other the like corrupt and unreasonable custom doth happen to have prevailed far, and to have gotten the upper hand of right reason with the greatest part, so that no way is left to rectify such foul disorder without prescribing by law the same things which reason necessarily *doth* enforce but is not *perceived* that so it doth; or if many be grown unto that which the Apostle did lament in some, concerning whom he writeth, saying, that *Even what things they naturally know, in those very things as beasts void of reason they corrupted themselves;* [15] or if there be no such special accident, yet forasmuch as the common sort are led by the sway of their sensual desires, and therefore do more shun sin for the sensible evils which follow it amongst men, than for any kind of sentence which reason doth pronounce against it; this very thing is cause sufficient why duties belonging unto such kind of virtue, albeit the law of reason teach them, should notwithstanding be prescribed even by human law. Which law in this case we term *mixed*, because the matter whereunto it bindeth is the same which reason necessarily doth require at our hands, and from the law of reason it differeth in the manner of binding only. For whereas men before stood bound in conscience to do as the law of reason teacheth, they are now by virtue of human law become constrainable, and if they outwardly transgress, punishable. As for laws which are *merely* human, the matter of them is any thing which reason doth but probably teach to be fit and convenient; so that till such time as law hath passed amongst men about it, of itself it bindeth no man. One example whereof may be this. Lands are by human law in some places after the owner's decease divided unto all his children, in some all descendeth to the eldest son. If the law of reason did necessarily require but the one of these

[15] Jude 10.

two to be done, they which by law have received the other should be subject to that heavy sentence, which denounceth against all that decree wicked, unjust, and unreasonable things, *woe*. Whereas now whichsoever be received there is no law of reason transgressed; because there is probable reason why either of them may be expedient, and for either of them more than probable reason there is not to be found.

[11] Laws whether mixedly or merely human are made by politic societies: some, only as those societies are civilly united; some, as they are spiritually joined and make such a body as we call the Church. Of laws human in this later kind we are to speak in the third book following. Let it therefore suffice thus far to have touched the force wherewith almighty God hath graciously endued our nature, and thereby enabled the same to find out both those laws which all men generally are for ever bound to observe, and also such as are most fit for their behoof, who lead their lives in any ordered state of government.

[12] Now besides that law which simply concerneth men as men, and that which belongeth unto them as they are men linked with others in some form of politic society, there is a third kind of law which toucheth all such several bodies politic, so far forth as one of them hath public commerce with another. And this third is the *law of nations*. Between men and beasts there is no possibility of sociable communion; because the well-spring of that communion is a natural delight which man hath to transfuse from himself unto others, and to receive from others into himself, especially those things wherein the excellency of his kind doth most consist. The chiefest instrument of human communion therefore is speech, because thereby we impart mutually one to another the conceits of our reasonable understanding. And for that cause seeing beasts are not hereof capable, forasmuch as with them we can use no such conference, they being in degree, although above other creatures on earth to whom nature hath denied sense, yet lower than to be sociable companions of man to whom nature hath given reason; it is of Adam said that amongst the beasts *He found*

not for himself any meet companion.[16] Civil society doth more content the nature of man than any private kind of solitary living, because in society this good of mutual participation is so much larger than otherwise. Herewith notwithstanding we are satisfied, but we covet (if it might be) to have a kind of society and fellowship even with all mankind. Which thing Socrates intending to signify professed himself a citizen, not of this or that commonwealth, but of the world. And an effect of that very natural desire in us, (a manifest token that we wish after a sort an universal fellowship with all men,) appeareth by the wonderful delight men have, some to visit foreign countries, some to discover nations not heard of in former ages, we all to know the affairs and dealings of other people, yea to be in league of amity with them: and this not only for traffic's sake, or to the end that when many are confederated each may make the other the more strong, but for such cause also as moved the Queen of Saba to visit Salomon;[17] and, in a word, because nature doth presume that how many men there are in the world, so many Gods as it were there are, or at leastwise such they should be towards men.

[13] Touching[18] laws which are to serve men in this behalf; even as those laws of reason, which (man retaining his original integrity) had been sufficient to direct each particular person in all his affairs and duties, are not sufficient but require the access of other laws, now that man and his offspring are grown thus corrupt and sinful; again, as those laws of polity and regiment, which would have served men living in public society together with that harmless disposition which then they should have had, are not able now to serve, when men's iniquity is so hardly restrained within any tolerable bounds: in like manner, the national laws of mutual commerce between societies of that former and better quality might have been other than now, when nations are so prone to offer violence, injury, and wrong. Hereupon hath grown in every of these three kinds that distinction between *Primary*

[16] Gen. ii. 20. [17] 1 Kings x. 1. [18] *i.e.*, to consider, treat of.

and *Secondary* laws; the one grounded upon sincere, the other built upon depraved nature. Primary laws of nations are such as concern embassage, such as belong to the courteous entertainment of foreigners and strangers, such as serve for commodious traffic, and the like. Secondary laws in the same kind are such as this present unquiet world is most familiarly acquainted with; I mean laws of arms, which yet are much better known than kept. But what matter the law of nations doth contain I omit to search.

The strength and virtue of that law is such that no particular nation can lawfully prejudice the same by any their several laws and ordinances, more than a man by his private resolutions the law of the whole commonwealth or state wherein he liveth. For as civil law, being the act of the whole body politic, doth therefore overrule each several part of the same body; so there is no reason that any one commonwealth of itself should to the prejudice of another annihilate that whereupon the world hath agreed. For which cause, the Lacedemonians forbidding all access of strangers into their coasts are in that respect both by Josephus and Theodoret deservedly blamed, as being enemies to that hospitality which for common humanity's sake all the nations on earth should embrace.

[14] Now as there is great cause of communion, and consequently of laws for the maintenance of communion, amongst nations; so amongst nations Christian the like in regard even of Christianity hath been always judged needful.

And in this kind of correspondence amongst nations the force of general councils doth stand. For as one and the same law divine, whereof in the next place we are to speak, is unto all Christian churches a rule for the chiefest things, by means whereof they all in that respect make one Church, as having all but *One Lord, one faith, and one baptism:*[19] so the urgent necessity of mutual communion for preservation of our unity in these things, as also for order in some other things convenient to be everywhere

[19] Ephes. iv. 5.

uniformly kept, maketh it requisite that the Church of God here on earth have her laws of spiritual commerce between Christian nations; laws by virtue whereof all churches may enjoy freely the use of those reverend, religious, and sacred consultations, which are termed councils general. A thing whereof God's own blessed Spirit was the author; a thing practised by the holy Apostles themselves; a thing always afterwards kept and observed throughout the world; a thing never otherwise than most highly esteemed of, till pride, ambition, and tyranny began by factious and vile endeavours to abuse that divine invention unto the furtherance of wicked purposes. But as the just authority of civil courts and parliaments is not therefore to be abolished, because sometime there is cunning used to frame them according to the private intents of men overpotent in the commonwealth; so the grievous abuse which hath been of councils should rather cause men to study how so gracious a thing may again be reduced to that first perfection, than in regard of stains and blemishes sithence growing be held for ever in extreme disgrace.

To speak of this matter as the cause requireth would require very long discourse. All I will presently say is this. Whether it be for the finding out of any thing whereunto divine law bindeth us, but yet in such sort that men are not thereof on all sides resolved; or for the setting down of some uniform judgment to stand touching such things, as being neither way matters of necessity, are notwithstanding offensive and scandalous when there is open opposition about them; be it for the ending of strifes touching matters of Christian belief, wherein the one part may seem to have probable cause of dissenting from the other; or be it concerning matters of polity, order, and regiment in the church; I nothing doubt but that Christian men should much better frame themselves to those heavenly precepts, which our Lord and Saviour with so great instancy gave[20] as concerning peace and unity, if we did all concur in desire to have the use of ancient councils

[20] John xiv. 27.

again renewed, rather than these proceedings continued, which either make all contentions endless, or bring them to one only determination, and that of all other the worst, which is by sword.

[15] It followeth therefore that a new foundation being laid, we now adjoin hereunto that which cometh in the next place to be spoken of; namely, wherefore God hath himself by scripture made known such laws as serve for direction of men.

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XI. [6] From salvation therefore and life all flesh being excluded this way, behold how the wisdom of God hath revealed a way mystical and supernatural, a way directing unto the same end of life by a course which groundeth itself upon the guiltiness of sin, and through sin desert of condemnation and death. For in this way the first thing is the tender compassion of God respecting us drowned and swallowed up in misery; the next is redemption out of the same by the precious death and merit of a mighty Saviour, which hath witnessed of himself, saying, *I am the way*,[21] the way that leadeth us from misery into bliss. This supernatural way had God in himself prepared before all worlds. The way of supernatural duty which to us he hath prescribed, our Saviour in the Gospel of St. John doth note, terming it by an excellency, the work of God; *This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent*.[22] Not that God doth require nothing unto happiness at the hands of men saving only a naked belief, for hope and charity we may not exclude; but that without belief all other things are as nothing, and it the ground of those other divine virtues.

Concerning faith, the principal object whereof is that eternal verity which hath discovered the treasures of hidden wisdom in Christ; concerning hope, the highest object whereof is that everlasting goodness which in Christ doth quicken the dead; concerning charity, the final object whereof is that incomprehensible

[21] John xiv. 6. [22] John vi. 29.

beauty which shineth in the countenance of Christ the Son of the living God: concerning these virtues, the first of which beginning here with a weak apprehension of things not seen, endeth with the intuitive vision of God in the world to come; the second beginning here with a trembling expectation of things far removed and as yet but only heard of, endeth with real and actual fruition of that which no tongue can express; the third beginning here with a weak inclination of heart towards him unto whom we are not able to approach, endeth with endless union, the mystery whereof is higher than the reach of the thoughts of men; concerning that faith, hope, and charity, without which there can be no salvation, was there ever any mention made saving only in that law which God himself hath from heaven revealed? There is not in the world a syllable muttered with certain truth concerning any of these three, more than hath been supernaturally received from the mouth of the eternal God.

Laws therefore concerning these things are supernatural, both in respect of the manner of delivering them, which is divine; and also in regard of the things delivered, which are such as have not in nature any cause from which they flow, but were by the voluntary appointment of God ordained besides the course of nature, to rectify nature's obliquity withal.

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XVI. [8] Wherefore that here we may briefly end: of Law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world; all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power; both Angels and men and creatures of what condition soever, though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.[23]

[23] Book I. closes with this grand peroration, this "celebrated sentence," as Hallam calls it. (See note in Church's Clarendon Press edition.)

IV.

FRANCIS BACON.

(1561—1626.)

1. *THE ESSAYES OR COUNSELS, CIVILL AND MORALL, OF FRANCIS LO. VERULAM, VISCOUNT ST. ALBAN.*

Of Religion. (1612.)

ENLARGED AND TITLE CHANGED TO

Of Unity in Religion. (1625.)

1. *Of Religion.*

The quarrels and divisions for *Religion* were evils unknowne to the Heathen: and no marvell; for it is the true God that is the jealous God; and the gods of the Heathen were good fellowes. But yet the bonds of religious unity are so to be strengthened, as the bonds of humane society be not dissolved.

Lucretius the Poet, when hee beheld the act of *Agamemnon*, enduring and assisting at the sacrifice of his daughter, concludes with this verse:

Tantum relligio potuit suadere malorum.[1]

But what would hee have done, if he had knowne the massacre of *France*,[2] or the powder treason of *England*?[3] Certainly he would have been seven times more Epicure and Atheist then he was. Nay, hee would rather have chosen to be one of the Mad men of *Munster*, then to have beene a partaker of those Counsels. For it is better that Religion should deface mens understanding, then their piety and charitie; retaining reason onely but as an *Engine* and *Charriot driver* of cruelty and malice.

[1] *To such evils could Religion induce men.*— Lucretius, *De rerum Natura*, I. 102. [2] August 24, 1572. [3] November 5, 1605.

It was a great blasphemie, when the Divell said; *I will ascend, and be like the highest:*[20] but it is a greater blasphemie, if they make God to say; *I will descend, and bee like the Prince of Darknesse:* and it is no better, when they make the cause of *Religion* descend to the execrable accions of murthering of Princes, butchery of people, and firing of States. Neither is there such a sinne against the person of the holy Ghost, (if one should take it literally) as in stead of the likenes of a *Dove*, to bring him downe in the likenesse of a *Vulture*, or *Raven;* nor such a scandall to their Church, as out of the Barke of Saint *Peter*, to set forth the flagge of a Barge of *Pirats* and *Assassins*. Therefore since these things are the common enemies of humane society; *Princes* by their power; *Churches* by their Decrees; and all learning, Christian, morall, of what soever sect, or opinion, by their *Mercurie* rod; ought to joyne in the damning to Hell for ever these facts and their supports: and in all Counsels concerning religion, that Counsell of the Apostle would be prefixed, *Ira hominis non implet justitiam Dei.*[4]

2. *Of Unity in Religion.*

Religion being the chiefe Band of humane Society, it is a happy thing when it selfe is well contained within the true Band of *Unity*. The Quarrels and Divisions about *Religion* were Evils unknowne to the Heathen. The Reason was because the *Religion* of the Heathen consisted rather in Rites and Ceremonies then in any constant Beleefe. For you may imagine what kinde of Faith theirs was, when the chiefe Doctors and Fathers of their Church were the Poets. But the true God hath this Attribute, That he is a *Jealous God;* And therefore, his worship and *Religion* will endure no Mixture, nor Partner.

We shall therefore speake a few words concerning the *Unity* of the *Church; What are the Fruits thereof; what the Bounds; And what the Meanes?*

[4] Jas. i. 20: '*The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.*'

The Fruits of Unity (next unto the well Pleasing of God, which is All in All) are two; the One, towards those that are *without the Church;* the Other, towards those *that are within.* For the Former; It is certaine that Heresies and Schismes are of all others,[5] the greatest Scandals; yea more then Corruption of Manners. For as in the Naturall Body, a wound or Solution of Continuity is worse than a Corrupt Humor; So in the Spirituall. So that nothing doth so much keepe Men out of the Church, and drive Men out of the Church, as Breach of *Unity;* And therefore, whensoever it commeth to that passe that one saith, *Ecce in Deserto;*[6] Another saith, *Ecce in penetralibus;*[6] That is, when some Men seeke Christ in the Conventicles of Heretikes, and others in an Outward Face of a Church, that voice had need continually to sound in Mens Eares, *Nolite exire, Goe not out.* The Doctor of the Gentiles (the Propriety of whose Vocation drew him to have a speciall care of those *without*) saith; *If an Heathen come in, and heare you speake with severall Tongues, Will he not say that you are mad?*[7] And certainly it is little better when Atheists and prophane Persons do heare of so many Discordant and Contrary Opinions in *Religion;* It doth avert them from the Church, and maketh them, *To sit downe in the chaire of the Scorners.*[8] It is but a light Thing to be Vouched in so Serious a Matter, but yet it expresseth well the Deformity. There is a Master of Scoffing; that in his Catalogue of Books, of a faigned Library, sets Downe this Title of a Booke; *The morris daunce of Heretikes.*[9] For indeed, every Sect of them hath a Divers Posture, or Cringe by themselves, which cannot but Move Derision in Worldlings, and Depraved Politickes, who are apt to contemne Holy Things.

[5] Common expression in Elizabethan English.

[6] Matt. xxiv. 26 (Vulgate): '*Behold he is in the desert*'; '*Behold he is in the secret chambers.*'

[7] 1 Cor. xiv. 23.

[8] Ps. i. 1.

[9] *La Morisque des heretiques.* RABELAIS, *Pantagruel*, II. 7. — ARBER. See Douce's Illustrations of Shakespeare, Dissertation III. pp. 576 ff., for full de-

As for the *Fruit towards those that are within;* It is *Peace;* which containeth infinite Blessings: It establisheth Faith; It kindleth Charity; The outward Peace of the Church Distilleth into Peace of Conscience; And it turneth the Labours of Writing and Reading of Controversies into Treaties of Mortification and Devotion.

Concerning the *Bounds of Unity;* The true Placing of them importeth exceedingly.[10] There appeare to be two extremes. For to certaine *Zelants*[11] all Speech of Pacification is odious. *Is it peace, Jehu? What hast thou to doe with peace? turne thee behinde me.*[12] *Peace* is not the Matter, but *Following* and *Party.* Contrariwise, certaine *Laodiceans,* and Luke-warme Persons, thinke they may accommodate Points of *Religion* by Middle-Waies and taking part of both; And witty Reconcilements; As if they would make an Arbitrement betweene God and Man. Both these Extremes are to be avoyded; which will be done, if the League of Christians, penned by our Saviour himselfe, were in the two crosse Clauses thereof soundly and plainly expounded; *He that is not with us, is against us:*[13] And againe; *He that is not against us, is with us:*[14] That is, if the Points Fundamentall and of Substance in *Religion* were truly discerned and distinguished from Points not meerely of Faith, but of Opinion, Order, or good Intention. This is a Thing may seeme to Many a Matter triviall, and done already: But if it were done lesse partially, it would be embraced more generally.

Of this I may give onely this Advice, according to my small Modell. Men ought to take heede of rending God's Church by two kinds of Controversies. The one is, when the Matter of the Point controverted is too small and light, not worth the Heat and Strife about it kindled onely by Contradiction. For, as it is noted by one of the Fathers; *Christs Coat, indeed, had no seame: But*

scription of the Morris-dance. See also Hone's Ancient Mysteries Described, p. 268, for plate of a *Fool's Morris Dance,* etched by Cruikshank.

[10] is of great importance. [11] zealots. [12] 2 Kings ix. 18.

[13] Matt. xii. 30. [14] Mark ix. 40.

the Churches Vesture was of divers colours;[15] whereupon he saith, *In veste varietas sit, Scissura non sit;*[16] They be two Things, *Unity* and *Uniformity*. The other is, when the Matter of the Point Controverted is great; but it is driven to an over-great Subtility and Obscurity; So that it becommeth a Thing rather Ingenious than Substantiall. A man that is of Judgement and understanding shall sometimes heare Ignorant Men differ, and know well within himselfe that those which so differ meane one thing, and yet they themselves would never agree. And if it come so to passe in that distance of Judgement, which is betweene Man and Man; Shall wee not thinke that God above, that knowes the Heart, doth not discerne that fraile Men, in some of their Contradictions, intend the same thing, and accepteth of both? The Nature of such Controversies is excellently expressed by St. *Paul* in the Warning and Precept that he giveth concerning the same, *Devita profanas vocum Novitates, et Oppositiones falsi Nominis Scientiæ.*[17] Men create Oppositions, which are not; And put them into new termes, so fixed as whereas the Meaning ought to govern the Terme, the Terme in effect governeth the Meaning. There be also two false *Peaces*, or *Unities;* The one, when the *Peace* is grounded but upon an implicite ignorance; For all Colours will agree in the Darke: The other, when it is peeced up upon a direct Admission of Contraries in Fundamentall Points. For Truth and Falshood, in such things, are like the *Iron* and *Clay, in the toes of Nabucadnezars Image;*[18] They may Cleave, but they will not Incorporate.

Concerning the *Meanes of procuring Unity;* Men must beware that in the Procuring, or Muniting, of *Religious Unity*, they doe not

[15] The allusion is to Ps. xlv. 14, where, instead of 'in raiment of needlework,' the Vulgate has *circumamicta varietatibus*, 'enveloped with varieties.' — ARBER.

[16] In raiment let there be variety, but not rents. ST. BERNARD, *Ad Guillelum Abbatem Apologia*, pp. 983, 4, ed. 1640. — ARBER.

[17] 1 Tim. vi. 20: '*Avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so-called.*'

[18] Dan. ii. 33.

Dissolve and Deface the Lawes of Charity and of humane Society. There be two Swords amongst Christians; the Spirituall, and Temporall; And both have their due Office and place in the maintenance of *Religion*. But we may not take up the Third sword, which is Mahomets Sword, or like unto it; That is, to propagate *Religion* by Warrs, or by Sanguinary Persecutions, to force Consciences; except it be in the cases of Overt Scandall, Blasphemy, or Intermixture of practize, against the State; Much lesse to Nourish Seditions; to Authorize Conspiracies and Rebellions; To put the Sword into the Peoples Hands; And the like; Tending to the Subversion of all Government, which is the Ordinance of God. For this is but to dash the first Table against the Second;[19] And so to consider Men as Christians, as we forget that they are Men. *Lucretius* the Poet, when he beheld the Act of *Agamemnon*, that could endure the Sacrificing of his owne Daughter, exclaimed;

Tantum relligio potuit suadere malorum.[1]

What would he have said, if he had knowne of the Massacre in France,[2] or the Powder Treason of England?[3] He would have beene Seven times more Epicure and Atheist then he was. For as the Temporall Sword is to bee drawne with great circumspection in cases of *Religion;* So it is a thing Monstrous, to put into the hands of the Common People. Let that bee left unto the Anabaptists and other Furies. It was great Blasphemy, when the Devill said; *I will ascend, and bee like the Highest;*[20] But it is greater Blasphemy to personate God, and bring him in saying; *I will descend, and be like the Prince of Darknesse;* And what is it better to make the cause of *Religion* to descend to the cruell and execrable Actions of Murthering Princes, Butchery of People, and Subversion of States and Governments? Surely, this is to bringe Downe the Holy Ghost, in stead of the Likenesse of a Dove, in the Shape of a Vulture, or Raven: And to set out of the Barke of a Christian Church a Flagge of a Barque of Pirats and

[19] Ex. xxxii. 19. [20] Isa. xiv. 14.

Assassins. Therefore it is most necessary that the Church by Doctrine and Decree; Princes by their Sword; And all Learnings, both Christian and Morall, as by their Mercury Rod; Doe Damne and send to Hell, for ever, those Facts and Opinions, tending to the Support of the same; As hath beene already in good part done. Surely in Counsels Concerning *Religion*, that Counsel of the Apostle would be prefixed; *Ira hominis non implet justiciam Dei.*[4] And it was a notable Observation of a wise Father, And no lesse ingenuously confessed, *That those which held and perswaded pressure of Consciences, were commonly interessed therein themselves for their owne ends.*

IV.

2. *THE HISTORY OF KING HENRY VII.*

[Written about 1621.]

The History of the Reign of King Henry the Seventh.

After that Richard, the third of that name, King in fact only, but tyrant both in title and regiment,[1] and so commonly termed and reputed in all times since, was, by the divine revenge favouring the design of an exiled man, overthrown and slain at Bosworth-field; there succeeded in the kingdom the earl of Richmond, thenceforth styled Henry the seventh. The King, immediately after the victory, as one that had been bred under a devout mother, and was in his nature a great observer of religious forms, caused *Te Deum laudamus* to be solemnly sung in the presence of the whole army upon the place, and was himself with general applause and great cries of joy, in a kind of military election or recognition, saluted King. Meanwhile the body of Richard, after many indignities and reproaches, the *diriges*[2] and obsequies of the common people towards tyrants, was obscurely buried. For though the King of his nobleness gave charge unto the friars of Leicester to see an honourable interment to be given to it, yet the religious people themselves, being not free from the humours of the vulgar, neglected it; wherein nevertheless they did not then incur any man's blame or censure: no man thinking any ignominy or contumely unworthy of him that had been the executioner of King Henry the sixth, that innocent Prince, with his own hands; the contriver of the death of the duke of Clarence his brother; the murderer of his two nephews, one of them his lawful King in the present, and the other in the future, failing of him, and vehemently

[1] government. [2] funeral hymns, hence *dirges*.

suspected to have been the impoisoner of his wife, thereby to make vacant his bed for a marriage within the degrees forbidden. And although he were a Prince in military virtue approved, jealous of the honour of the English nation, and likewise a good law-maker, for the ease and solace of the common people; yet his cruelties and parricides, in the opinion of all men, weighed down his virtues and merits; and, in the opinion of wise men, even those virtues themselves were conceived to be rather feigned and affected things to serve his ambition, than true qualities ingenerate in his judgment or nature. And therefore it was noted by men of great understanding, who seeing his after-acts, looked back upon his former proceedings, that even in the time of King Edward his brother he was not without secret trains and mines to turn envy and hatred upon his brother's government; as having an expectation and a kind of divination, that the King, by reason of his many disorders, could not be of long life, but was like to leave his sons of tender years; and then he knew well how easy a step it was from the place of a protector and first Prince of the blood to the crown. And that out of this deep root of ambition it sprung, that as well at the treaty of peace that passed between Edward the fourth and Lewis the eleventh of France, concluded by interview of both Kings at Piqueny,[3] as upon all other occasions, Richard, then duke of Gloucester, stood ever upon the side of honour, raising his own reputation to the disadvantage of the King his brother, and drawing the eyes of all, especially of the nobles and soldiers, upon himself; as if the King, by his voluptuous life and mean marriage, were become effeminate and less sensible of honour and reason of state than was fit for a King. And as for the politic and wholesome laws which were enacted in his time, they were interpreted to be but the brocage[4] of an usurper, thereby to woo and win the hearts of the people, as being conscious to himself that the true obligations of sovereignty in him failed, and were wanting. But King Henry, in the very entrance of his

[3] in 1475. [4] mean practices.

reign, and the instant of time when the kingdom was cast into his arms, met with a point of great difficulty, and knotty to solve, able to trouble and confound the wisest King in the newness of his estate; and so much the more, because it could not endure a deliberation, but must be at once deliberated and determined. There were fallen to his lot, and concurrent in his person, three several titles to the imperial crown. The first, the title of the lady Elizabeth, with whom, by precedent pact[5] with the party that brought him in, he was to marry. The second, the ancient and long disputed title, both by plea and arms, of the house of Lancaster, to which he was inheritor in his own person. The third, the title of the sword or conquest, for that he came in by victory of battle, and that the king in possession was slain in the field. The first of these was fairest, and most likely to give contentment to the people, who by two and twenty years reign of King Edward the fourth had been fully made capable of the clearness of the title of the white rose or house of York; and, by the mild and plausible reign of the same King toward his latter time, were become affectionate to that line. But then it lay plain before his eyes, that if he relied upon that title, he could be but a King at courtesy, and have rather a matrimonial than a regal power; the right remaining in his Queen, upon whose decease, either with issue or without issue, he was to give place and be removed. And though he should obtain by parliament to be continued, yet he knew there was a very great difference between a King that holdeth his crown by a civil act of estates, and one that holdeth it originally by the law of nature and descent of blood. Neither wanted there even at that time secret rumours and whisperings, which afterwards gathered strength and turned to great troubles, that the two young sons of King Edward the fourth, or one of them, which were said to be destroyed in the Tower, were not indeed murdered, but conveyed secretly away, and were yet living: which, if it had been true, had prevented the title of the lady Elizabeth.

[5] agreement.

On the other side, if he stood upon his own title of the house of Lancaster, inherent in his person, he knew it was a title condemned by parliament, and generally prejudged[6] in the common opinion of the realm, and that it tended directly to the disinherison[7] of the line of York, held then the indubitate[8] heirs of the crown. So that if he should have no issue by the lady Elizabeth, which should be descendants of the double line, then the ancient flames of discord and intestine wars, upon the competition of both houses, would again return and revive.

As for conquest, notwithstanding Sir William Stanley, after some acclamations of the soldiers in the field, had put a crown of ornament, which Richard wore in the battle and was found amongst the spoils, upon King Henry's head, as if there were his chief title; yet he remembered well upon what conditions and agreements he was brought in; and that to claim as conqueror, was to put as well his own party, as the rest, into terror and fear; as that which gave him power of disannulling of laws, and disposing of men's fortunes and estates, and the like points of absolute power, being in themselves so harsh and odious, as that William himself, commonly called the conqueror, howsoever he used and exercised the power of a conqueror to reward his Normans, yet he forebore to use that claim in the beginning, but mixed it with a titulary pretence, grounded upon the will and designation of Edward the confessor. But the King, out of the greatness of his own mind, presently cast the die; and the inconveniences appearing unto him on all parts, and knowing there could not be any interreign or suspension of title, and preferring his affection to his own line and blood, and liking that title best which made him independent; and being in his nature and constitution of mind not very apprehensive or forecasting of future events afar off, but an entertainer of fortune by the day; resolved to rest upon the title of Lancaster as the main, and to use the other two, that of marriage, and that of battle, but as supporters, the one to appease secret discontents,

[6] prejudiced. [7] disinheriting. [8] undoubted.

and the other to beat down open murmur and dispute; not forgetting that the same title of Lancaster had formerly maintained a possession of three descents in the crown; and might have proved a perpetuity, had it not ended in the weakness and inability of the last prince. Whereupon the King presently that very day, being the two and twentieth of August, assumed the style of King in his own name, without mention of the lady Elizabeth at all, or any relation[9] thereunto. In which course he ever after persisted; which did spin him a thread of many seditions and troubles. The King, full of these thoughts, before his departure from Leicester, dispatched Sir Robert Willoughby to the castle of Sheriff-Hutton in Yorkshire, where were kept in safe custody, by King Richard's commandment, both the lady Elizabeth, daughter of King Edward, and Edward Plantagenet, son and heir to George duke of Clarence. This Edward was by the King's warrant delivered from the constable of the castle to the hand of Sir Robert Willoughby; and by him with all safety and diligence conveyed to the Tower of London, where he was shut up close prisoner. Which act of the king's, being an act merely of policy and power, proceeded not so much from any apprehension he had of doctor Shaw's tale at Paul's cross,[10] for the bastarding of Edward the fourth's issues, in which case this young gentleman was to succeed, for that fable was ever exploded, but upon a settled disposition to depress all eminent persons of the line of York. Wherein still the King, out of strength of will or weakness of judgment, did use to shew a little more of the party than of the King.

For the lady Elizabeth, she received also a direction to repair with all convenient speed to London, and there to remain with the Queen dowager her mother; which accordingly she soon after did, accompanied with many noblemen and ladies of honour. In the mean season the King set forwards by easy journeys to the city of London, receiving the acclamations and applauses of the

[9] reference. [10] See note in Lumby's edition (Pitt Press Series).

people as he went, which indeed were true and unfeigned, as might well appear in the very demonstrations and fulness of the cry. For they thought generally, that he was a Prince, as ordained and sent down from heaven, to unite and put to an end the long dissensions of the two houses; which [11] although they had had, in the times of Henry the fourth, Henry the fifth, and a part of Henry the sixth, on the one side, and the times of Edward the fourth on the other, lucid intervals and happy pauses; yet they did ever hang over the kingdom, ready to break forth into new perturbations and calamities. And as his victory gave him the knee, so his purpose of marriage with the lady Elizabeth gave him the heart; so that both knee and heart did truly bow before him.

He on the other side with great wisdom, not ignorant of the affections and fears of the people, to disperse the conceit and terror of a conquest, had given order, that there should be nothing in his journey like unto a warlike march or manner; but rather like unto the progress of a King in full peace and assurance.

He entered the city upon a Saturday; as he had also obtained the victory upon a Saturday; which day of the week, first upon an observation, and after upon memory and fancy, he accounted and chose as a day prosperous unto him.

The mayor and companies of the city received him at Shoreditch; whence with great and honourable attendance, and troops of noblemen, and persons of quality, he entered the city; himself not being on horseback, or in any open chair or throne, but in a close chariot, as one that having been sometimes an enemy to the whole state, and a proscribed person, chose rather to keep state, and strike a reverence into the people, than to fawn upon them.

He went first into St. Paul's church, where, not meaning that the people should forget too soon that he came in by battle, he made offertory of his standards, and had orisons and *Te Deum* again sung; and went to his lodging prepared in the bishop of London's palace, where he stayed for a time.

[11] No predicate, as *they* is inserted afterwards.

During his abode there, he assembled his council and other principal persons, in presence of whom he did renew again his promise to marry with the lady Elizabeth. This he did the rather, because having at his coming out of Britain[12] given artificially, for serving his own turn, some hopes, in case he obtained the kingdom, to marry Anne, inheritress to the duchy of Britain, whom Charles the eighth of France soon after married, it bred some doubt and suspicion amongst divers that he was not sincere, or at least not fixed in going on with the match of England so much desired: which conceit also, though it were but talk and discourse, did much afflict the poor lady Elizabeth herself. But howsoever he both truly intended it, and desired also it should be so believed, the better to extinguish envy and contradiction to his other purposes, yet was he resolved in himself not to proceed to the consummation thereof, till his coronation and a parliament were past. The one, lest a joint coronation of himself and his Queen might give any countenance of participation of title; the other, lest in the entailing of the crown to himself, which he hoped to obtain by parliament, the votes of the parliament might any ways reflect upon her.

About this time in autumn, towards the end of September, there began and reigned in the city, and other parts of the kingdom, a disease then new: which by the accidents and manner thereof they called the sweating sickness. This disease had a swift course, both in the sick body, and in the time and period of the lasting thereof; for they that were taken with it, upon four and twenty hours escaping, were thought almost assured. And as to the time of the malice and reign of the disease, ere it ceased; it began about the one and twentieth of September, and cleared up before the end of October, insomuch as it was no hindrance to the King's coronation, which was the last of October; nor, which was more, to the holding of the parliament, which began but seven days after. It was a pestilent fever, but, as it seemeth, not seated in

[12] Brittany.

the veins or humours, for there followed no carbuncle, no purple or livid spots, or the like, the mass of the body being not tainted; only a malign vapour flew to the heart, and seized the vital spirits; which stirred nature to strive to send it forth by an extreme sweat. And it appeared by experience that this disease was rather a surprise of nature than obstinate to remedies, if it were in time looked unto. For if the patient were kept in an equal temper, both for clothes, fire, and drink, moderately warm, with temperate cordials, whereby nature's work were neither irritated by heat, nor turned back by cold, he commonly recovered. But infinite persons died suddenly of it, before the manner of the cure and attendance was known. It was conceived not to be an epidemic disease, but to proceed from a malignity in the constitution of the air, gathered by the predispositions of seasons; and the speedy cessation declared as much.

On Simon and Jude's eve,[13] the King dined with Thomas Bourchier, archbishop of Canterbury and cardinal; and from Lambeth went by land over the bridge to the Tower, where the morrow after he made twelve knights bannerets. But for creations he dispensed them with a sparing hand. For notwithstanding a field so lately fought, and a coronation so near at hand, he only created three: Jasper, earl of Pembroke, the King's uncle, was created duke of Bedford; Thomas, the lord Stanley, the King's father-in-law, earl of Derby; and Edward Courtney, earl of Devon; though the King had then nevertheless a purpose in himself to make more in time of Parliament; bearing a wise and decent respect to distribute his creations, some to honour his coronation, and some his parliament.

The coronation followed two days after, upon the thirtieth day of October, in the year of our Lord 1485; at which time Innocent the eighth was Pope of Rome; Frederick the third Emperor of Almain;[14] and Maximilian his son newly chosen King of the Romans; Charles the eighth King of France; Ferdinando and

[13] October 27. [14] Germany.

Isabella Kings of Spain; and James the third, King of Scotland: with all which Kings and States the King was at that time in good peace and amity. At which day also, as if the crown upon his head had put perils into his thoughts, he did institute, for the better security of his person, a band of fifty archers, under a captain, to attend him, by the name of yeomen of his guard: and yet, that it might be thought to be rather a matter of dignity, after the imitation of what he had known abroad, than any matter of diffidence appropriate to his own case, he made it to be understood for an ordinance not temporary, but to hold in succession for ever after.

* * * * * *

This King, to speak of him in terms equal to his deserving, was one of the best sort of wonders; a wonder for wise men. He had parts, both in his virtues and his fortune, not so fit for a common place, as for observation. Certainly he was religious, both in his affection and observance. But as he could see clear, for those times, through superstition, so he would be blinded, now and then, by human policy. He advanced churchmen; he was tender in the privilege of sanctuaries, though they wrought him much mischief. He built and endowed many religious foundations, besides his memorable hospital of the Savoy: and yet was he a great almsgiver in secret; which shewed that his works in public were dedicated rather to God's glory than his own. He professed always to love and seek peace: and it was his usual preface in his treaties, that when Christ came into the world, peace was sung; and when he went out of the world, peace was bequeathed. And this virtue could not proceed out of fear or softness; for he was valiant and active, and therefore, no doubt, it was truly Christian and moral. Yet he knew the way to peace was not to seem to be desirous to avoid wars: therefore would he make offers and fames [15] of wars, till he had mended the conditions of peace. It was also

[15] reports.

much, that one that was so great a lover of peace, should be so happy in war. For his arms, either in foreign or civil wars, were never unfortunate; neither did he know what a disaster meant. The war of his coming in, and the rebellions of the earl of Lincoln, and the lord Audley, were ended by victory. The wars of France and Scotland, by peaces sought at his hands. That of Britain, by accident of the duke's death. The insurrection of the lord Lovel, and that of Perkin at Exeter, and in Kent, by flight of the rebels before they came to blows. So that his fortune of arms was still inviolate: the rather sure, for that in the quenching of the commotions of his subjects, he ever went in person: sometimes reserving himself to back and second his lieutenants, but ever in action; and yet that was not merely forwardness, but partly distrust of others.

He did much maintain and countenance his laws; which, nevertheless, was no impediment to him to work his will: for it was so handled, that neither prerogative nor profit went to diminution. And yet as he would sometimes strain up his laws to his prerogative, so would he also let down his prerogative to his parliament. For mint,[16] and wars, and martial discipline, things of absolute power, he would nevertheless bring to parliament. Justice was well administered in his time, save where the King was party: save also, that the council-table intermeddled too much with *meum* and *tuum*.[17] For it was a very court of justice during his time, especially in the beginning; but in that part both of justice and policy, which is the durable part, and cut, as it were, in brass or marble, which is the making of good laws, he did excel. And with his justice, he was also a merciful prince: as in whose time, there were but three of the nobility that suffered; the earl of Warwick, the lord chamberlain, and the lord Audley: though the first two were instead of numbers in the dislike and obloquy of the people. But there were never so great rebellions, expiated with so little blood, drawn by the hand of justice, as the two rebellions

[16] coinage of money.

[17] *mine* and *thine*.

of Blackheath and Exeter. As for the severity used upon those which were taken in Kent, it was but upon a scum of people. His pardons went ever both before and after his sword. But then he had withal a strange kind of interchanging of large and inexpected pardons, with severe executions: which, his wisdom considered, could not be imputed to any inconstancy or inequality; but either to some reason which we do not now know, or to a principle he had set unto himself, that he would vary, and try both ways in turn. But the less blood he drew, the more he took of treasure. And, as some construed it, he was the more sparing in the one, that he might be the more pressing in the other; for both would have been intolerable. Of nature assuredly he coveted to accumulate treasure, and was a little poor in admiring riches. The people, into whom there is infused, for the preservation of monarchies, a natural desire to discharge their princes,[18] though it be with the unjust charge of their counsellors and ministers, did impute this unto cardinal Morton and Sir Reginald Bray: who, as it after appeared, as counsellors of ancient authority with him, did so second his humours, as nevertheless they did temper them. Whereas Empson and Dudley that followed, being persons that had no reputation with him, otherwise than by the servile following of his bent, did not give way only, as the first did, but shape him way to those extremities, for which himself was touched with remorse at his death, and which his successor renounced and sought to purge. This excess of his had at that time many glosses[19] and interpretations. Some thought the continual rebellions wherewith he had been vexed, had made him grow to hate his people: some thought it was done to pull down their stomachs, and to keep them low: some, for that he would leave his son a golden fleece: some suspected he had some high design upon foreign parts: but those perhaps shall come nearest the truth, that fetch not their reasons so far off; but rather impute it to nature, age, peace, and a mind fixed upon no other ambition or pursuit. Whereunto I should

[18] relieve them from blame.

[19] explanations.

add, that having every day occasion to take notice of the necessities and shifts for money of other great Princes abroad, it did the better, by comparison, set off to him the felicity of full coffers. As to his expending of treasure, he never spared charge which his affairs required; and in his buildings was magnificent, but his rewards were very limited: so that his liberality was rather upon his own state and memory than upon the deserts of others.

He was of an high mind, and loved his own will and his own way: as one that revered himself and would reign indeed. Had he been a private man, he would have been termed proud. But in a wise Prince, it was but keeping of distance, which indeed he did towards all; not admitting any near or full approach, either to his power, or to his secrets: for he was governed by none. His Queen, notwithstanding she had presented him with divers children, and with a crown also, though he would not acknowledge it, could do nothing with him. His mother he reverenced much, heard little. For any person agreeable to him for society, such as was Hastings to King Edward the fourth, or Charles Brandon after to King Henry the eighth, he had none: except we should account for such persons, Fox, and Bray, and Empson, because they were so much with him: but it was but as the instrument is much with the workman. He had nothing in him of vainglory, but yet kept state and majesty to the height: being sensible that majesty maketh the people bow, but vainglory boweth to them.

To his confederates abroad he was constant and just, but not open. But rather such was his inquiry, and such his closeness, as they stood in the light towards him, and he stood in the dark to them. Yet without strangeness, but with a semblance of mutual communication of affairs. As for little envies, or emulations upon sovereign princes, which are frequent with many Kings, he had never any; but went substantially to his own business. Certain it is, that though his reputation was great at home, yet it was greater abroad. For foreigners that could not see the passages of affairs, but made their judgments upon the issues of them, noted that he

was ever in strife, and ever aloft. It grew also from the airs which the princes and states abroad received from their ambassadors and agents here; which were attending the court in great number: whom he did not only content with courtesy, reward, and privateness; but, upon such conferences as passed with them, put them in admiration, to find his universal insight into the affairs of the world: which though he did suck chiefly from themselves, yet that which he had gathered from them all, seemed admirable to every one. So that they did write ever to their superiors in high terms, considering his wisdom and art of rule: nay, when they were returned, they did commonly maintain intelligence with him. Such a dexterity he had to impropriate to himself all foreign instruments.

He was careful and liberal to obtain good intelligence from all parts abroad: wherein he did not only use his interest in the liegers here, and his pensioners, which he had both in the court of Rome, and other the courts of Christendom; but the industry and vigilance of his own ambassadors in foreign parts. For which purpose his instructions were ever extreme, curious and articulate;[20] and in them more articles touching inquisition, than touching negotiation: requiring likewise from his ambassadors an answer, in particular distinct articles, respectively to his questions.

As for his secret spials,[21] which he did employ both at home and abroad, by them to discover what practices and conspiracies were against him, surely his case required it; he had such moles perpetually working and casting to undermine him. Neither can it be reprehended; for if spials be lawful against lawful enemies, much more against conspirators and traitors. But indeed to give them credence[22] by oaths or curses, that cannot be well maintained; for those are too holy vestments for a disguise. Yet surely there was this farther good in his employing of these flies and familiars; that as the use of them was cause that many con-

[20] particular.
[21] spies.
[22] To cause them to be believed to be his enemies.

spiracies were revealed, so the fame and suspicion of them kept, no doubt, many conspiracies from being attempted.

Towards his Queen he was nothing uxorious, nor scarce indulgent; but companionable and respective, and without jealousy. Towards his children he was full of paternal affection, careful of their education, aspiring to their high advancement, regular to see that they should not want of any due honour and respect, but not greatly willing to cast any popular lustre upon them.

To his council he did refer much, and sat oft in person; knowing it to be the way to assist his power, and inform his judgment. In which respect also he was fairly patient of liberty, both of advice, and of vote, till himself were declared. He kept a strait hand on his nobility, and chose rather to advance clergymen and lawyers, which were more obsequious to him, but had less interest in the people; which made for his absoluteness, but not for his safety. Insomuch as, I am persuaded, it was one of the causes of his troublesome reign; for that his nobles, though they were loyal and obedient, yet did not co-operate with him, but let every man go his own way. He was not afraid of an able man, as Lewis the eleventh was: but contrariwise, he was served by the ablest men that were to be found; without which his affairs could not have prospered as they did. For war, Bedford, Oxford, Surrey, Daubeney, Brook, Poynings: for other affairs, Morton, Fox, Bray, the prior of Lanthony, Warham, Urswick, Hussey, Frowick, and others. Neither did he care how cunning they were that he did employ; for he thought himself to have the master-reach. And as he chose well, so he held them up well; for it is a strange thing, that though he were a dark prince, and infinitely suspicious, and his times full of secret conspiracies and troubles; yet in twenty-four years' reign, he never put down, or discomposed counsellor, or near servant, save only Stanley the lord chamberlain. As for the disposition of his subjects in general towards him, it stood thus with him; that of the three affections which naturally tie the hearts of the subjects to their sovereigns, love, fear, and reverence; he had the last in height, the second in good

measure, and so little of the first, as he was beholden to the other two.

He was a Prince, sad,[23] serious, and full of thoughts and secret observations, and full of notes and memorials of his own hand, especially touching persons. As, whom to employ, whom to reward, whom to inquire of, whom to beware of, what were the dependencies, what were the factions, and the like; keeping, as it were, a journal of his thoughts. There is to this day a merry tale; that his monkey, set on as it was thought by one of his chamber, tore his principal note-book all to pieces, when by chance it lay forth: whereat the court, which liked not these pensive[24] accounts, was almost tickled with sport.

He was indeed full of apprehensions and suspicions: but as he did easily take them, so he did easily check them and master them; whereby they were not dangerous, but troubled himself more than others. It is true, his thoughts were so many, as they could not well always stand together; but that which did good one way, did hurt another. Neither did he at some times weigh them aright in their proportions. Certainly, that rumor which did him so much mischief, that the duke of York should be saved, and alive, was, at the first, of his own nourishing; because he would have more reason not to reign in the right of his wife. He was affable, and both well and fair-spoken; and would use strange sweetness and blandishments of words, where he desired to effect or persuade any thing that he took to heart. He was rather studious than learned; reading most books that were of any worth, in the French tongue, yet he understood the Latin, as appeareth in that cardinal Adrian and others, who could very well have written French, did use to write to him in Latin.

For his pleasures, there is no news of them: and yet by his instructions to Marsin and Stile, touching the Queen of Naples, it seemeth he could interrogate well touching beauty. He did by pleasures, as great Princes do by banquets, come and look a little

[23] grave. [24] weighty.

upon them, and turn away. For never Prince was more wholly given to his affairs, nor in them more of himself: insomuch as in triumphs of jousts and tourneys, and balls, and masks, which they then called disguises, he was rather a princely and gentle spectator, than seemed much to be delighted.

No doubt, in him, as in all men, and most of all in Kings, his fortune wrought upon his nature, and his nature upon his fortune. He attained to the crown, not only from a private fortune, which might endow him with moderation; but also from the fortune of an exiled man, which had quickened in him all seeds of observation and industry. And his times being rather prosperous than calm, had raised his confidence by success, but almost marred his nature by troubles. His wisdom, by often evading from perils, was turned rather into a dexterity to deliver himself from dangers, when they pressed him, than into a providence to prevent and remove them afar off. And even in nature, the sight of his mind was like some sights of eyes; rather strong at hand, than to carry afar off. For his wit increased upon the occasion; and so much the more, if the occasion were sharpened by danger. Again, whether it were the shortness of his foresight, or the strength of his will, or the dazzling of his suspicions, or what it was; certain it is, that the perpetual troubles of his fortunes, there being no more matter out of which they grew, could not have been without some great defects and main errors in his nature, customs, and proceedings, which he had enough to do to save and help with a thousand little industries and watches. But those do best appear in the story itself. Yet take him with all his defects, if a man should compare him with the Kings his concurrents[25] in France and Spain, he shall find him more politic than Lewis the twelfth of France, and more entire and sincere than Ferdinando of Spain. But if you shall change Lewis the twelfth for Lewis the eleventh, who lived a little before, then the consort is more perfect. For that Lewis the eleventh, Ferdinando, and Henry may be

[25] contemporaries.

esteemed for the *tres magi*[26] of Kings of those ages. To conclude, if this King did no greater matters, it was long of[27] himself; for what he minded he compassed.

He was a comely personage, a little above just stature, well and straight limbed, but slender. His countenance was reverend, and a little like a churchman: and as it was not strange or dark, so neither was it winning or pleasing, but as the face of one well disposed. But it was to the disadvantage of the painter, for it was best when he spake.

His worth may bear a tale or two, that may put upon him somewhat that may seem divine. When the lady Margaret his mother had divers great suitors for marriage, she dreamed one night that one in the likeness of a bishop in pontifical habit did tender her Edmund earl of Richmond, the King's father, for her husband, neither had she ever any child but the King, though she had three husbands. One day when King Henry the sixth, whose innocency gave him holiness, was washing his hands at a great feast, and cast his eye upon King Henry, then a young youth, he said; "This is the lad that shall possess quietly that, that we now strive for." But that, that was truly divine in him, was that he had the fortune of a true Christian, as well as of a great King, in living exercised, and dying repentant: So as he had an happy warfare in both conflicts, both of sin, and the cross.

He was born at Pembroke castle, and lieth buried at Westminster, in one of the stateliest and daintiest monuments of Europe, both for the chapel, and for the sepulchre. So that he dwelleth more richly dead, in the monument of his tomb, than he did alive in Richmond, or any of his palaces. I could wish he did the like in this monument of his fame.

[26] three wise men. [27] owing to.

V.

BEN JONSON.

(1574–1637.)

TIMBER, OR DISCOVERIES MADE UPON MEN AND MATTER.

[Written after 1630.]

It pleased your lordship of late, to ask my opinion touching the education of your sons, and especially to the advancement of their studies. To which, though I returned somewhat for the present, which rather manifested a will in me, than gave any just resolution to the thing propounded; I have upon better cogitation called those aids about me, both of mind and memory, which shall venture my thoughts clearer, if not fuller, to your lordship's demand. I confess, my lord, they will seem but petty and minute things I shall offer to you, being writ for children, and of them. But studies have their infancy, as well as creatures. We see in men even the strongest compositions had their beginnings from milk and the cradle; and the wisest tarried sometimes about apting[1] their mouths to letters and syllables. In their education, therefore, the care must be the greater had of their beginnings, to know, examine, and weigh their natures; which though they be power in some children to some disciplines; yet are they naturally prompt to taste all by degrees, and with change. For change is a kind of refreshing in studies, and infuseth knowledge by way of recreation. Thence the school itself is called a play or game; and all letters are so best taught to scholars. They should not be affrighted or deterred in their entry, but drawn on with exercise

[1] fitting.

and emulation. A youth should not be made to hate study, before he know the causes to love it; or taste the bitterness before the sweet; but called on and allured, intreated and praised; yea, when he deserves it not. For which cause I wish them sent to the best school, and a public, which I think the best. Your lordship, I fear, hardly hears of that, as willing to breed them in your eye, and at home, and doubting their manners may be corrupted abroad. They are in more danger in your own family, among ill servants, (allowing they be safe in their school-master) than amongst a thousand boys, however immodest. Would we did not spoil our own children, and overthrow their manners ourselves by too much indulgence! To breed them at home, is to breed them in a shade; where in a school they have the light and heat of the sun.

They are used and accustomed to things and men. When they come forth into the commonwealth, they find nothing new, or to seek. They have made their friendships and aids, some to last their age. They hear what is commanded to others as well as themselves. Much approved, much corrected; all which they bring to their own store and use, and learn as much as they hear. Eloquence would be but a poor thing, if we should only converse with singulars;[2] speak but man and man together. Therefore I like no private breeding. I would send them where their industry should be daily increased by praise; and that kindled by emulation. It is a good thing to inflame the mind, and though ambition itself be a vice, it is often the cause of great virtue. Give me that wit whom praise excites, glory puts on, or disgrace grieves; he is to be nourished with ambition, pricked forward with honour, checked with reprehension, and never to be suspected of sloth. Though he be given to play, it is a sign of spirit and liveliness, so there be a mean had of their sports and relaxations. And from the rod and ferule, I would have them free, as from the menace of them; for it is both deformed[3] and servile.

[2] single persons. [3] degrading.

De stylo, et optimo scribendi genere.[4] For a man to write well, there are required three necessaries: to read the best authors, observe the best speakers, and much exercise of his own style. In style to consider what ought to be written, and after what manner; he must first think and excogitate his matter, then choose his words, and examine the weight of either. Then take care in placing and ranking both matter and words, that the composition be comely, and to do this with diligence and often. No matter how slow the style be at first, so it be laboured and accurate; seek the best, and be not glad of the froward conceits, or first words, that offer themselves to us, but judge of what we invent, and order what we approve. Repeat often what we have formerly written; which[5] beside that it helps the consequence, and makes the juncture better, it quickens the heat of imagination, that often cools in the time of setting down, and gives it new strength, as if it grew lustier by the going back. As we see in the contention of leaping, they jump farthest, that fetch their race largest; or, as in throwing a dart or javelin, we force back our arms, to make our loose the stronger. Yet, if we have a fair gale of wind, I forbid not the steering out of our sail, so the favour of the gale deceive us not. For all that we invent doth please us in conception of birth, else we would never set it down. But the safest is to return to our judgment, and handle over again those things, the easiness of which might make them justly suspected. So did the best writers in their beginnings; they imposed upon themselves care and industry; they did nothing rashly; they obtained first to write well, and then custom made it easy and a habit. By little and little their matter shewed itself to them more plentifully; their words answered, their composition followed; and all, as in a well-ordered family, presented itself in the place. So that the sum of all is, ready writing makes not good writing; but good writing brings on ready writing; yet, when we think we have got the faculty, it is even then good to resist it; as to give a horse

[4] *On style, and the best kind of writing.* [5] No predicate, as often.

a check sometimes with a bit, which does not so much stop his course, as stir his mettle. Again, whether a man's genius is best able to reach thither, it should more and more contend, lift, and dilate itself, as men of low stature raise themselves on their toes, and so oft-times get even, if not eminent. Besides, as it is fit for grown and able writers to stand of themselves, and work with their own strength, to trust and endeavour by their own faculties: so it is fit for the beginner and learner to study others and the best. For the mind and memory are more sharply exercised in comprehending another man's things than our own; and such as accustom themselves, and are familiar with the best authors, shall ever and anon find somewhat of them in themselves, and in the expression of their minds, even when they feel it not, be able to utter something like theirs, which hath an authority above their own. Nay, sometimes it is the reward of a man's study, the praise of quoting another man fitly; and though a man be more prone, and able for one kind of writing than another, yet he must exercise all. For as in an instrument, so in style, there must be a harmony and consent of parts.

I take this labour in teaching others, that they should not be always to be taught, and I would bring my precepts into practice: for rules are ever of less force and value than experiments: yet with this purpose, rather to show the right way to those that come after, than to detect any that have slipt before by error, and I hope it will be more profitable. For men do more willingly listen, and with more favour to precept, than reprehension. Among divers opinions of an art, and most of them contrary in themselves, it is hard to make election; and therefore though a man cannot invent new things after so many, he may do a welcome work yet to help posterity to judge rightly of the old. But arts and precepts avail nothing, except nature be beneficial and aiding. And therefore these things are no more written to a dull disposition, than rules of husbandry to a soil. No precepts will profit a fool, no more than beauty will the blind, or music the deaf. As we should take care that our style in writing be neither dry nor

empty; we should look again it be not winding, or wanton with far-fetched descriptions; either is a vice. But that is worse which proceeds out of want, than that which riots out of plenty. The remedy of fruitfulness is easy, but no labour will help the contrary; I will like and praise some things in a young writer; which yet, if he continue in, I cannot but justly hate him for the same. There is a time to be given all things for maturity, and that even your country husbandman can teach; who to a young plant will not put the pruning-knife, because it seems to fear the iron, as not able to admit the scar. No more would I tell a green writer all his faults, lest I should make him grieve and faint, and at last despair. For nothing doth more hurt than to make him so afraid of all things, as he can endeavour nothing. Therefore youth ought to be instructed betimes, and in the best things; for we hold those longest we take soonest: as the first scent of a vessel lasts, and the tinct[6] the wool first receives; therefore a master should temper his own powers, and descend to the other's infirmity. If you pour a glut of water upon a bottle, it receives little of it; but with a funnell, and by degrees, you shall fill many of them, and spill little of your own; to their capacity they will all receive and be full. And as it is fit to read the best authors to youth first, so let them be of the openest and clearest.[7] As Livy before Sallust, Sidney before Donne: and beware of letting them taste Gower, or Chaucer at first, lest falling too much in love with antiquity, and not apprehending the weight, they grow rough and barren in language only. When their judgments are firm, and out of danger, let them read both the old and the new; but no less take heed that their new flowers and sweetness do not as much corrupt as the others dryness and squalor, if they choose not carefully. Spenser, in affecting the ancients, writ no language; yet I would have him read for his matter, but as Virgil read Ennius. The reading of Homer and Virgil is counselled by

[6] dye.

[7] Livy, Sallust, Sidney, Donne, Gower, Chaucer, Spenser, Virgil, Ennius, Homer, Quintilian, Plautus, Terence. — JONSON'S note.

Quintilian, as the best way of informing youth, and confirming man. For, besides that the mind is raised with the height and sublimity of such a verse, it takes spirit from the greatness of the matter, and is tincted with the best things. Tragic and lyric poetry is good too, and comic with the best, if the manners of the reader be once in safety. In the Greek poets, as also in Plautus, we shall see the economy and disposition of poems better observed than in Terence; and the latter, who thought the sole grace and virtue of their fable the sticking in of sentences, as ours do the forcing in of jests.

We should not protect our sloth with the patronage of difficulty. It is a false quarrel against nature, that she helps understanding but in a few, when the most part of mankind are inclined by her thither, if they would take the pains; no less than birds to fly, horses to run, etc., which if they lose, it is through their own sluggishness, and by that means become her prodigies, not her children. I confess, nature in children is more patient of labour in study, than in age; for the sense of the pain, the judgment of the labour is absent, they do not measure what they have done. And it is the thought and consideration that affects us more than the weariness itself. Plato was not content with the learning that Athens could give him, but sailed into Italy, for Pythagoras' knowledge: and yet not thinking himself sufficiently informed, went into Egypt, to the priests, and learned their mysteries. He laboured, so must we. Many things may be learned together, and performed in one point of time: as musicians exercise their memory, their voice, their fingers, and sometimes their head and feet at once. And so a preacher, in the invention of matter, election of words, composition of gesture, look, pronunciation, motion, useth all these faculties at once: and if we can express this variety together, why should not divers studies, at divers hours, delight, when the variety is able alone to refresh and repair us? As when a man is weary of writing, to read; and then again of reading, to write. Wherein, howsoever we do many things, yet are we (in a sort) still fresh to what we begin; we are recreated with

change, as the stomach is with meats. But some will say, this variety breeds confusion, and makes, that either we lose all, or hold no more than the last. Why do we not then persuade husbandmen that they should not till land, help it with marle, lime and compost? plant hop-gardens, prune trees, look to bee-hives, rear sheep, and all other cattle at once? It is easier to do many things and continue, than to do one thing long.

It is not the passing through these learnings that hurts us, but the dwelling and sticking about them. To descend to those extreme anxieties and foolish cavils of grammarians, is able to break a wit in pieces, being a work of manifold misery and vainness, to be *elementarii senes*.[8] Yet even letters are as it were the bank of words, and restore themselves to an author, as the pawns of language: but talking and eloquence are not the same: to speak, and to speak well, are two things. A fool may talk, but a wise man speaks, and out of the observation, knowledge, and the use of things, many writers perplex their readers and hearers with mere nonsense. Their writings need sunshine. Pure and neat language I love, yet plain and customary. A barbarous phrase has often made me out of love with a good sense, and doubtful writing hath wracked me beyond my patience. The reason why a poet is said that he ought to have all knowledges is, that he should not be ignorant of the most, especially of those he will handle. And indeed, when the attaining of them is possible, it were a sluggish and base thing to despair. For frequent imitation of any thing becomes a habit quickly. If a man should prosecute as much as could be said of every thing, his work would find no end.

Speech is the only benefit man hath to express his excellency of mind above other creatures. It is the instrument of society; therefore Mercury, who is the president of language, is called *Deorum hominumque interpres*.[9] In all speech, words and sense are as the body and the soul. The sense is, as the life and soul of

[8] *old schoolmasters.* — After SENECA, *Epist.* 36.

[9] *Interpreter of gods and men.* Cf. *Interpres Divum*, VIRGIL, *Æneid*, IV. 377.

language, without which all words are dead. Sense is wrought out of experience, the knowledge of human life and actions, or of the liberal arts, which the Greeks called Ἐνκυκλοπαιδείαν.* Words are the people's, yet there is a choice of them to be made. For *Verborum delectus origo est eloquentiæ*.[10] They are to be chose according to the persons we make speak, or the things we speak of. Some are of the camp, some of the council-board, some of the shop, some of the sheep-cote, some of the pulpit, some of the bar, &c. And herein is seen their elegance and propriety, when we use them fitly, and draw them forth to their just strength and nature, by way of translation or metaphor. But in this translation we must only serve necessity (*Nam temerè nihil transfertur à prudenti*),[11] or commodity, which is a kind of necessity: that is, when we either absolutely want a word to express by, and that is necessity; or when we have not so fit a word, and that is commodity; as when we avoid loss by it, and escape obsceneness, and gain in the grace and property which helps significance. Metaphors far-fet,[12] hinder to be understood; and affected, lose their grace. Or when the person fetcheth his translations from a wrong place. As if a privy-counsellor should at the table take his metaphor from a dicing-house, or ordinary, or a vintner's vault; or a justice of peace draw his similitudes from the mathematics, or a divine from a bawdy-house, or taverns; or a gentleman of Northamptonshire, Warwickshire, or the Midland, should fetch all the illustrations to his country neighbours from shipping, and tell them of the main-sheet and the boulin.[13] Metaphors are thus many times deformed. . . . All attempts that are new in this kind, are dangerous, and somewhat hard, before they be softened with use. A man coins not a new word without some peril, and less fruit; for if it happen to be received, the praise is but moderate; if refused, the scorn is

[10] *The choice of words is the source of eloquence.* — JULIUS CÆSAR, as stated by CICERO, *Brutus*, chap. 72; quoted also in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.

[11] *For no metaphor is rashly used by a wise man.*

[12] far-fetched. [13] bow-line. * *Encyclopædia* = general education.

assured. Yet we must adventure; for things, at first hard and rough, are by use made tender and gentle. It is an honest error that is committed, following great chiefs.

Custom is the most certain mistress of language, as the public stamp makes the current money. But we must not be too frequent with the mint, every day coining, nor fetch words from the extreme and utmost ages; since the chief virtue of a style is perspicuity, and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter. Words borrowed of antiquity do lend a kind of majesty to style, and are not without their delight sometimes. For they have the authority of years, and out of their intermission do win themselves a kind of grace-like newness. But the eldest of the present, and newness of the past language, is the best. For what was the ancient language, which some men so dote upon, but the ancient custom? yet when I name custom, I understand not the vulgar custom; for that were a precept no less dangerous to language than life, if we should speak or live after the manners of the vulgar: but that I call custom of speech, which is the consent of the learned; as custom of life, which is the consent of the good. Virgil was most loving of antiquity; yet how rarely doth he insert *aquai*, and *pictai!*[14] Lucretius is scabrous and rough in these; he seeks them; as some do Chaucerisms with us, which were better expunged and banished. Some words are to be culled out for ornament and color, as we gather flowers to strew houses, or make garlands; but they are better when they grow to our style; as in a meadow, where though the mere grass and greenness delight, yet the variety of flowers doth heighten and beautify. Marry we must not play or riot too much with them, as in Paronomasies; nor use too swelling or ill-sounding words; *Quæ per salebras, altaque saxa cadunt.*[15] It is true, there is no sound but shall find some lovers, as the bitterest confections are grateful to some palates. Our composition must be more accurate in the

[14] Archaic Latin genitives.

[15] *Which tumble over rough places and high rocks.* — MARTIAL, *Epigrams*, Book XI. 91. 2.

beginning and end than in the midst, and in the end more than in the beginning; for through the midst the stream bears us. And this is attained by custom more than care or diligence. We must express readily and fully, not profusely. There is a difference between a liberal and prodigal hand. As it is a great point of art, when our matter requires it, to enlarge and veer out all sail; so to take it in and contract it, is of no less praise, when the argument doth ask it. Either of them hath their fitness in the place. A good man always profits by his endeavour, by his help, yea, when he is absent, nay, when he is dead, by his example and memory. So good authors in their style: a strict and succinct style is that, where you can take away nothing without loss, and that loss to be manifest.

The brief style is that which expresseth much in little. The concise style, which expresseth not enough, but leaves somewhat to be understood. The abrupt style, which hath many breaches, and doth not seem to end, but fall. The congruent and harmonious fitting of parts in a sentence hath almost the fastening and force of knitting and connection; as in stones well squared, which will rise strong a great way without mortar.

Periods are beautiful, when they are not too long; for so they have their strength too, as in a pike or javelin. As we must take the care that our words and sense be clear; so if the obscurity happen through the hearer's or reader's want of understanding, I am not to answer for them, no more than for their not listening or marking; I must neither find them ears nor mind. But a man cannot put a word so in sense, but something about it will illustrate it, if the writer understand himself. For order helps much to perspicuity, as confusion hurts. *Rectitudo lucem adfert; obliquitas et circumductio offuscat.*[16] We should therefore speak what we can the nearest way, so as we keep our gait, not leap; for too short may as well be not let into the memory, as too long not kept in. Whatsoever loseth the grace and clearness, converts

[16] *Directness brings light; crookedness and circumlocution darkens.*

into a riddle: the obscurity is marked, but not the value. That perisheth, and is passed by like the pearl in the fable. Our style should be like a skein of silk, to be carried and found by the right thread, not ravelled and perplexed; then all is a knot, a heap. There are words that do as much raise a style, as others can depress it. Superlation and overmuchness amplifies. It may be above faith, but never above a mean. It was ridiculous in Cestius, when he said of Alexander:

Fremit oceanus, quasi indignetur, quòd terras relinquas;[17]

but propitiously from Virgil:

— Credas innare revulsas
Cycladas.[18]

He doth not say it was so, but seemed to be so. Although it be somewhat incredible, that is excused before it be spoken. But there are hyperboles which will become one language, that will by no means admit another. As, *Eos esse P. R. exercitus, qui coelum possint perrumpere,*[19] who would say with us, but a madman? Therefore we must consider in every tongue what is used, what received. Quintilian warns us, that in no kind of translation, or metaphor, or allegory, we make a turn from what we began; as if we fetch the original of our metaphor from sea, and billows, we end not in flames and ashes: it is a most foul inconsequence. Neither must we draw out our allegory too long, lest either we make ourselves obscure, or fall into affectation, which is childish. But why do men depart at all from the right and natural ways of speaking? sometimes for necessity, when we are driven, or think it fitter to speak that in obscure words, or by circumstance, which uttered plainly would offend the hearers. Or to avoid obscene-

[17] *The ocean rages as if it were angry because you are leaving the land.*

[18] *You would think that the Cyclades plucked up were swimming.* — VIRGIL, *Æneid*, VIII. 691, 692.

[19] *That the armies of the Roman people are those who can break through heaven.* — CÆSAR.

ness, or sometimes for pleasure, and variety, as travellers turn out of the highway, drawn either by the commodity of a foot-path, or the delicacy or freshness of the fields. And all this is called ἐσχηματισμένη, or figured language.

Language most shews a man: Speak, that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired and inmost parts of us, and is the image of the parent of it, the mind. No glass renders a man's form, or likeness so true as his speech. Nay, it is likened to a man: and as we consider feature and composition in a man, so words in language; in the greatness, aptness, sound, structure, and harmony of it.

Some men are tall and big, so some language is high and great. Then the words are chosen, their sound ample, the composition full, the absolution plenteous, and poured out, all grave, sinewy, and strong. Some are little and dwarfs; so of speech it is humble and low, the words poor and flat, the members and periods thin and weak, without knitting or number.

The middle are of a just stature. There the language is plain and pleasing; even without stopping, round without swelling: all well-toned, composed, elegant and accurate.

The vicious language is vast, and gaping, swelling, and irregular: when it contends to be high, full of rock, mountain, and pointedness: as it affects to be low, it is abject, and creeps, full of bogs and holes. And according to their subject these styles vary, and lose their names: for that which is high and lofty, declaring excellent matter, becomes vast and tumorous, speaking of petty and inferior things: so that which was even and apt in a mean and plain subject, will appear most poor and humble in a high argument. Would you not laugh to meet a great counsellor of state in a flat cap, with his trunk hose, and a hobby-horse cloak, his gloves under his girdle, and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown, furred with sables? There is a certain latitude in these things, by which we find the degrees.

The next thing to the stature, is the figure and feature in language; that is, whether it be round and straight, which consists of

short and succinct periods, numerous and polished, or square and firm, which is to have equal and strong parts every where answerable, and weighed.

The third is the skin and coat, which rests in the well-joining, cementing, coagmentation of words; when as it is smooth, gentle, and sweet, like a table upon which you may run your finger without rubs, and your nail cannot find a joint; not horrid, rough, wrinkled, gaping, or chapt: after these, the flesh, blood, and bones come in question.

We say it is a fleshy style, when there is much periphrasis, and circuit of words; and when with more than enough, it grows fat and corpulent; *arvina orationis*, full of suet and tallow. It hath blood and juice when the words are proper and apt, their sound sweet, and the phrase neat and picked.

But where there is redundancy, both the blood and juice are faulty and vicious: *Redundat sanguine, quia multò plus dicit, quàm necesse est.*[20] Juice in language is somewhat less than blood; for if the words be but becoming and signifying, and the sense gentle, there is juice; but where that wanteth, the language is thin, flagging, poor, starved, scarce covering the bone, and shews like stones in a sack.

Some men, to avoid redundancy, run into that; and while they strive to have no ill blood or juice, they lose their good. There be some styles again, that have not less blood, but less flesh and corpulence. These are bony and sinewy; *Ossa habent, et nervos.*[21]

It was well noted by the late Lord St. Alban, that the study of words is the first distemper of learning; vain matter the second; and a third distemper is deceit, or the likeness of truth; imposture held up by credulity. All these are the cobwebs of learning, and to let them grow in us, is either sluttish, or foolish. Nothing is more ridiculous than to make an author a dictator, as the schools have done Aristotle. The damage is infinite knowledge receives by it; for to many things a man should owe but a tem-

[20] *It abounds in blood* [*i.e.* force] *because it says much more than is necessary.* [21] *They have bones and sinews.*

porary belief, and suspension of his own judgment, not an absolute resignation of himself, or a perpetual captivity. Let Aristotle and others have their dues; but if we can make farther discoveries of truth and fitness than they, why are we envied? Let us beware, while we strive to add, we do not diminish, or deface; we may improve but not augment. By discrediting falsehood, truth grows in request. We must not go about, like men anguished and perplexed, for vicious affectation of praise: but calmly study the separation of opinions, find the errors have intervened, awake antiquity, call former times into question; but make no parties with the present, nor follow any fierce undertakers, mingle no matter of doubtful credit with the simplicity of truth, but gently stir the mould about the root of the question, and avoid all digladiations, facility of credit, or superstitious simplicity, seek the consonancy, and concatenation of truth; stoop only to point of necessity, and what leads to convenience. Then make exact animadversion where style hath degenerated, where flourished and thrived in choiceness of phrase, round and clean composition of sentence, sweet falling of the clause, varying an illustration by tropes and figures, weight of matter, worth of subject, soundness of argument, life of invention, and depth of judgment. This is *monte potiri*, to get the hill; for no perfect discovery can be made upon a flat or a level.

Now that I have informed you in the knowing these things, let me lead you by the hand a little farther, in the direction of the use, and make you an able writer by practice. The conceits of the mind are pictures of things, and the tongue is the interpreter of those pictures. The order of God's creatures in themselves is not only admirable and glorious, but eloquent: then he who could apprehend the consequence of things in their truth, and utter his apprehensions as truly, were the best writer or speaker. Therefore Cicero said much, when he said, *Dicere rectè nemo potest, nisi qui prudenter intelligit.*[22] The shame of speaking unskilfully were

[22] *No one can speak rightly but one who understands wisely.* — CICERO.

small, if the tongue only thereby were disgraced; but as the image of a king, in his seal ill-represented, is not so much a blemish to the wax, or the signet that sealed it, as to the prince it representeth; so disordered speech is not so much injury to the lips that give it forth, as to the disproportion and incoherence of things in themselves, so negligently expressed. Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune, whose words do jar; nor his reason in frame, whose sentence is preposterous; nor his elocution clear and perfect, whose utterance breaks itself into fragments and uncertainties. Were it not a dishonour to a mighty prince, to have the majesty of his embassage spoiled by a careless ambassador? and is it not as great an indignity, that an excellent conceit and capacity, by the indiligence of an idle tongue, should be disgraced? Negligent speech doth not only discredit the person of the speaker, but it discrediteth the opinion of his reason and judgment; it discrediteth the force and uniformity of the matter and substance. If it be so then in words, which fly and escape censure, and where one good phrase begs pardon for many incongruities and faults, how shall he then be thought wise, whose penning is thin and shallow? how shall you look for wit from him, whose leisure and head, assisted with the examination of his eyes, yield you no life or sharpness in his writing?

VI.

THOMAS FULLER.

(1608—1661.)

THE HOLY STATE AND THE PROFANE STATE.

THE HOLY STATE.

[Written about 1640.]

Book II. Chapter XVI.

The Good Schoolmaster.

There is scarce any profession in the commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly performed. The reasons whereof I conceive to be these: First, young scholars make this calling their refuge: yea, perchance, before they have taken any degree in the University, commence schoolmasters in the country; as if nothing else were required to set up this profession, but only a rod and a ferula. Secondly, others, who are able, use it only as a passage to better preferment; to patch the rents in their present fortune, till they can provide a new one, and betake themselves to some more gainful calling. Thirdly, they are disheartened from doing their best, with the miserable reward which in some places they receive, — being masters to their children, and slaves to their parents. Fourthly, being grown rich, they grow negligent; and scorn to touch the school, but by the proxy of an usher. But see how well our schoolmaster behaves himself.

Maxim I.

His genius inclines him with delight to his profession. — Some men had as lieve be school-boys as school-masters, — to be tied to the school as Cooper's "Dictionary" and Scapula's "Lexicon"

are chained to the desk therein; and, though great scholars, and skilful in other arts, are bunglers in this. But God of his goodness hath fitted several men for several callings, that the necessity of church and state, in all conditions, may be provided for. So that he who beholds the fabric thereof may say: "God hewed out this stone, and appointed it to lie in this very place; for it would fit none other so well and here it doth most excellent." And thus God mouldeth some for a schoolmaster's life; undertaking it with desire and delight, and discharging it with dexterity and happy success.

II.

He studieth his scholars' natures as carefully as they their books. — And ranks their dispositions into several forms. And though it may seem difficult for him in a great school to descend to all particulars, yet experienced schoolmasters may quickly make a grammar of boys' natures, and reduce them all (saving some few exceptions) to these general rules: —

1. *Those that are ingenious and industrious.* — The conjunction of two such planets in a youth presage much good unto him. To such a lad a frown may be a whipping, and a whipping a death; yea, where their master whips them once, shame whips them all the week after. Such natures he useth with all gentleness.

2. *Those that are ingenious and idle.* — These think with the hare in the fable, that, running with snails, (so they count the rest of their school-fellows,) they shall come soon enough to the post; though sleeping a good while before their starting. O! a good rod would finely take them napping!

3. *Those that are dull and diligent.* — Wines, — the stronger they be, the more lees they have when they are new. Many boys are muddy-headed till they be classified with age; and such afterwards prove the best. Bristol diamonds are both bright, and squared, and pointed by nature, and yet are soft and worthless; whereas orient ones, in India, are rough and rugged naturally. Hard, rugged, and dull natures of youth acquit themselves afterwards the jewels of the country; and, therefore, their dulness at

first is to be borne with, if they be diligent. That schoolmaster deserves to be beaten himself, who beats nature in a boy for a fault. And I question whether all the whipping in the world can make their parts which are naturally sluggish, rise one moment before the hour [which] nature hath appointed.

4. *Those that are invincibly dull and negligent also.* — Correction may reform the latter, but not amend the former. All the whetting in the world can never set a razor's edge on that which hath no steel in it. Such boys he consigneth over to other professions. Ship-wrights and boat-makers will choose those crooked pieces of timber which other carpenters refuse. Those may make excellent merchants and mechanics who will not serve for scholars.

III.

He is able, diligent, and methodical in his teaching. — Not leading them rather in a circle than forwards. He minces his precepts, for children to swallow; hanging clogs on the nimbleness of his own soul, that his scholars may go along with him.

IV.

He is, and will be known to be, an absolute monarch in his school. — If cockering[1] mothers proffer him money, to purchase their sons an exemption from his rod (to live, as it were, in a peculiar, out of their master's jurisdiction,) with disdain he refuseth it, and scorns the late custom in some places of commuting whipping into money, and ransoming boys from the rod at a set price. If he hath a stubborn youth, correction-proof, he debaseth not his authority by contesting with him, but fairly (if he can) puts him away, before his obstinancy hath infected others.

V.

He is moderate in inflicting deserved correction. — Many a schoolmaster better answereth the name παιδοτρίβης than παιδα-

[1] indulgent.

γωγός,[2] rather "tearing his scholars' flesh with whipping, than giving them good education." No wonder if his scholars hate the Muses, being presented unto them in the shapes of fiends and furies. Junius complains, *de insolenti carnificinâ*[3] of his schoolmaster, by whom *conscindebatur flagris septies aut octies in dies singulos*.[4] Yea, hear the lamentable verses of poor Tusser, in his own Life: —

"From Paul's I went,
To Eaton sent,
To learn straightways
The Latin phrase;
Where fifty-three
Stripes given to me
At once I had.

"For fault but small,
Or none at all,
It came to pass
Thus beat I was;
See, Udal,[5] see
The mercy of thee
To me, poor lad!"

Such an Orbilius mars more scholars than he makes. Their tyranny hath caused many tongues to stammer, which spake plain by nature, and whose stuttering at first was nothing else but fears quavering on their speech at their master's presence; and whose mauling them about their heads hath dulled those who in quickness exceeded their master.

VI.

He makes his school free to him, who sues to him IN FORMA PAUPERIS.[6] — And, surely, learning is the greatest alms that can be

[2] *punisher* than *tutor.* [3] *of the excessive torture.*

[4] *He was flogged seven or eight times every day.*

[5] Nicholas Udall, head master of Eton College, 1532–43, and author of our first comedy, "Ralph Roister Doister." [6] *as a poor boy.*

given. But he is a beast, who, because the poor scholar cannot pay him his wages, pays the scholar in his whipping. Rather are diligent lads to be encouraged with all excitements to learning. This minds me of what I have heard concerning Mr. Bust, that worthy late school-master of Eaton, who would never suffer any wandering, begging scholar (such as justly the statute hath ranked in the fore-front of rogues) to come into his school, but would thrust him out with earnestness, (however privately charitable unto him,) lest his school-boys should be disheartened from their books, by seeing some scholars, after their studying in the University, preferred to beggary.

VII.

He spoils not a good school, to make thereof a bad College. — Therein to teach his scholars logic. For, besides that logic may have an action of trespass against grammar for encroaching on her liberties, syllogisms are solecisms taught in the school; and oftentimes they are forced afterwards, in the University, to unlearn the fumbling skill they had before.

VIII.

Out of his school he is no whit pedantical in carriage or discourse. — Contenting himself to be rich in Latin, though he doth not jingle with it in every company wherein he comes.

To conclude: let this, amongst other motives, make school-masters careful in their place, that the eminences of their scholars have commended the memories of their school-masters to posterity, who, otherwise in obscurity, had altogether been forgotten. Who had ever heard of R. Bond, in Lancashire, but for the breeding of learned Ascham his scholar? or of Hartgrave, in Burnley school, in the same country, but because he was the first [who] did teach worthy Dr. Whitaker. Nor do I know the memory of Mulcaster for anything so much as for his scholar, that gulf of learning, Bishop Andrews. This made the Athenians, the

day before the great feast of Theseus their founder, to sacrifice a ram to the memory of Conidas, his school-master, that first instructed him.

Book III. Chapter XIII.

Of Recreations.

Recreations is a second creation, when weariness hath almost annihilated one's spirits. It is the breathing of the soul, which otherwise would be stifled with continual business. We may trespass in them, if using such as are forbidden by the — lawyer, as against the statutes — physician, as against health — divine, as against conscience.

Maxim I.

Be well satisfied in thy conscience of the lawfulness of the recreation thou usest. — Some fight against cock-fighting, and bait bull- and bear-baiting, because man is not to be a common barrister to set the creatures at discord; and, seeing antipathy betwixt creatures was kindled by man's sin, what pleasure can he take to see it burn? Others are of the contrary opinion, and that Christianity gives us a placard[7] to use these sports; and that man's character of dominion over the creatures enables him to employ them as well for pleasure as necessity. In these, as in all other doubtful recreations, be well assured, first, of the legality of them. He that sins against his conscience, sins with a witness.

II.

Spill not the morning (the quintessence of the day!) in recreations. — For sleep itself is a recreation. Add not, therefore, sauce to sauce; and *he* cannot properly have any title to be refreshed, *who* was not first faint. Pastime, like wine, is poison in the morning. It is then good husbandry to sow the head,

[7] license.

which hath lain fallow all night, with some serious work. Chiefly, intrench not on the Lord's day to use unlawful sports; this were to spare thine own flock, and to shear God's lamb.

III.

Let thy recreations be ingenious, and bear proportion with thine age. — If thou sayest with Paul, "When I was a child, I did as a child;" say also with him, "But when I was a man, I put away childish things." Wear also the child's coat, if thou usest his sports.

IV.

Take heed of boisterous and over-violent exercises. — Ringing oftimes hath made good music on the bells, and put men's bodies out of tune; so that, by over-heating themselves, they have rung their own passing-bell.

V.

Yet the under sort of people scarce count anything a sport which is not loud and violent. — The Muscovite women esteem none loving husbands except they beat their wives. It is no pastime with country-clowns that cracks not pates, breaks not shins, bruises not limbs, tumbles and tosses not all the body. They think themselves not warm in their gears, till they are all on fire; and count it but dry sport, till they swim in their own sweat. Yet I conceive the physician's rule in exercises, *Ad ruborem*, but *non ad sudorem*,[8] is too scant measure.

VI.

Refresh that part of thyself which is most wearied. — If thy life be sedentary, exercise thy body; if stirring and active, recreate thy mind. But take heed of cozening thy mind, in setting it to do a double task, under pretence of giving it a play-day, as in the labyrinth of chess, and other tedious and studious games.

[8] *to a glow*, but *not to a sweat.*

VII.

Yet recreations distasteful to some dispositions relish best to others. — Fishing with an angle is, to some, rather a torture than a pleasure, — to stand an hour as mute as the fish they mean to take; yet herewithal Dr. Whitaker was much delighted. When some nobleman had gotten William Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and Treasurer of England, to ride with them a-hunting, and the sport began to be cold, "What call you this?" said the Treasurer. "O! now," said they, "the dogs are at a fault." "Yea," quoth the Treasurer, "take me again in such a fault, and I will give you leave to punish me!" Thus, as soon may the same meat please all palates, as the same sport suit with all dispositions.

VIII.

Running, leaping, and dancing, the descants on the plain song of walking, are all excellent exercises. — And yet those are the best recreations which, beside refreshing, enable, at least dispose, men to some other good ends. Bowling teaches men's hands and eyes mathematics and the rules of proportion. Swimming hath saved many a man's life, when himself hath been both the wares and the ship. Tilting and fencing is war without anger; and manly sports are the grammar of military performance.

IX.

But, above all, shooting is a noble recreation, and a half-liberal art. — A rich man told a poor man, that he walked to get a stomach for his meat. "And I," said the poor man, "walk to get meat for my stomach." Now, schooling would have fitted both their turns; it provides food when men are hungry, and helps digestion when they are full. King Edward VI, though he drew no strong bow, shot very well; and when once John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, commended him for hitting the mark: "You shot better," quoth the king, "when you shot off my good uncle

Protector's head." But our age sees his successor[9] exceeding him in that art; whose eye, like his judgment, is clear and quick to discover the mark, and his hands as just in shooting as in dealing aright.

X.

Some sports, being granted to be lawful, more propend to be ill- than well-used. — Such I count stage-plays, when made always the actors' work, and often the spectators' recreation. Zeuxis, the curious picturer, painted a boy holding a dish full of grapes in his hand, done so lively, that the birds, being deceived, flew to pick the grapes. But Zeuxis, in an ingenious choler, was angry with his own workmanship. "Had I," said he, "made the boy as lively as the grapes, the birds would have been afraid to touch them." Thus two things are set forth to us in stage-plays: some grave sentences, prudent counsels, and punishment of vicious examples; and, with these, desperate oaths, lustful talk, and riotous acts are so personated to the life, that wantons are tickled with delight, and feed their palates upon them. It seems, the goodness is not portrayed out with equal accents of liveliness, as the wicked things are: otherwise, men would be deterred from vicious courses with seeing the woful success which follows them. But the main is, wanton speeches on stages are the devil's ordinance to beget badness; but I question whether the pious speeches spoken there be God's ordinance to increase goodness, as wanting both his institution and benediction.

XI.

Choke not thy soul with immoderate pouring-in the cordial of pleasure. — The creation lasted but six days of the first week. Profane they whose recreation lasts seven days every week. Rather abridge thyself of thy lawful liberty herein; it being a wary rule which St. Gregory gives us: *Solus in illicitis non cadit, qui se*

[9] Charles I.

aliquando et a licitis cautè restringit;[10] and then recreations shall both strengthen labour, and sweeten rest; and we may expect God's blessing and protection on us in following them, as well as in doing our work. For he that saith grace for his meat, in it prays also to God to bless the sauce unto him. As for those that will not take lawful pleasure, I am afraid they will take unlawful pleasure, and, by lacing themselves too hard, grow awry on one side.

Book III. Chapter XVIII.

Of Books.

Solomon saith truly, "Of making many books, there is no end;" so insatiable is the thirst of men therein: as also endless is the desire of many in buying and reading them. But we come to our rules: —

Maxim I.

It is a vanity to persuade the world one hath much learning, by getting a great library. — As soon shall I believe every one is valiant that hath a well-furnished armory. I guess good housekeeping by the smoking, not the number of the tunnels, as knowing that many of them (built merely for uniformity) are without chimnies, and more without fires. Once a dunce, void of learning but full of books, flouted a library-less scholar with these words: *Salve, Doctor sine libris!*[11] But the next day, the scholar coming into the jeerer's study crowded with books, *Salvete, libri,* saith he, *sine Doctore!*[12]

II.

Few books, well selected, are best. — Yet, as a certain fool bought all the pictures that came out, because he might have his

[10] *He alone does not fall in unlawful pleasures who sometimes restrains himself carefully even from lawful ones.*

[11] *Good-day, Doctor without books!* [12] *Good-day, books without a Doctor!*

choice; such is the vain humour of many men in gathering of books. Yet, when they have done all, they miss their end; it being in the editions of authors as in the fashion of clothes, — when a man thinks he hath gotten the latest and newest, presently another newer comes out.

III.

Some books are only cursorily to be tasted of. — Namely, first, voluminous books, the task of a man's life to read them over. Secondly, auxiliary books, only to be repaired to on occasion. Thirdly, such as are mere pieces of formality, so that if you look on them you look through them: and he that peeps through the casement of the index, sees as much as if he were in the house. But the laziness of those cannot be excused who perfunctorily pass over authors of consequence, and only trade in their tables and contents. These, like city-cheaters, having gotten the names of all country-gentlemen, make silly people believe they have long lived in those places where they never were, and flourish with skill in those authors they never seriously studied.

IV.

The genius of the author is commonly discovered in the Dedicatory Epistle. — Many place the purest grain in the mouth of the sack, for chapmen to handle or buy: and from the dedication one may probably guess at the work, saving some rare and peculiar exceptions. Thus, when once a gentleman admired how so pithy, learned, and witty a dedication was matched to a flat, dull, foolish book; "In truth," said another, "they will be well-matched together, for I profess they be nothing akin."

V.

Proportion an hour's meditation to an hour's reading of a staple author. — This makes a man master of his learning, and dispirits the book into the scholar. The king of Sweden never filed

his men above six deep in one company, because he would not have them lie in useless clusters in his army, but so that every particular soldier might be drawn out into service. Books that stand thin on the shelves, yet so as the owner of them can bring forth every one of them into use, are better than far greater libraries.

VI.

Learning hath gained most by those books by which the printers have lost. — Arias Montanus, in printing the Hebrew Bible (commonly called "the Bible of the King of Spain,") much wasted himself, and was accused in the Court of Rome for his good deed, and being cited thither, *Pro tantorum laborum præmio vix veniam impetravit.*[13] Likewise Christopher Plantin, by printing of his curious interlineary Bible in Antwerp, through the unseasonable exactions of the kings' officers, sunk and almost ruined his estate. And our worthy English knight, who set forth the golden-mouthed Father in a silver print, was a loser by it.[14]

VII.

Whereas foolish pamphlets prove most beneficial to the printers. — When a French printer complained that he was utterly undone by printing a solid, serious book of Rabelais concerning physic, Rabelais, to make him recompense, made that his jesting scurrilous work, which repaired the printers' loss with advantage. Such books the world swarms too much with. When one had set out a witless pamphlet, writing *Finis* at the end thereof, another wittily wrote beneath it, —

> "Nay, there thou liest, my friend,
> In writing foolish books there is *no end.*"

[13] *Scarcely obtained pardon, instead of a reward for so great labors.* — THUANUS.

[14] Sir Henry Savile's edition of "The Works of St. Chrysostom" (1613), said to have cost upwards of £8000. — NICHOLS.

And, surely, such scurrilous, scandalous papers do more than conceivable mischief. First, their lusciousness puts many palates out of taste, that they can never after relish any solid and wholesome writers. Secondly, they cast dirt on the faces of many innocent persons, which, dried on by continuance of time, can never after be washed off. Thirdly, the pamphlets of this age may pass for records with the next, because publicly uncontrolled; and what we laugh at, our children may believe. Fourthly, grant the things true they jeer at, yet this music is unlawful in any Christian church, — to play upon the sins and miseries of others; the fitter object of the elegies, than the satires, of all truly religious.

But what do I, speaking against multiplicity of books in this age, who trespass in this nature myself? What was a learned man's compliment, may serve for my confession and conclusion: *Multi mei similes hoc morbo laborant, ut cum scribere nesciant, tamen a scribendo temperare non possint.*[15]

Book IV. Chapter XIV.

The Life of Lady Jane Grey.

Jane Grey, eldest daughter of Henry Grey, marquess of Dorset, and duke of Suffolk, by Frances Brandon, eldest daughter of Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, and Mary his wife, youngest daughter to king Henry VII, was by her parents bred, according to her high birth, in religion and learning. They were no whit indulgent to her in her childhood, but extremely severe, more than needed to so sweet a temper; for what need iron instruments to bow wax?

But as the sharpest Winters, correcting the rankness of the earth, cause the more healthful and fruitful Summers; so the harshness of her breeding compacted her soul to the greater

[15] *Many like myself suffer from this disease, namely that, although they do not know how to write, yet they cannot refrain from writing.* — Erasmus.

patience and piety; so that afterwards she proved the mirror of her age, and attained to be an excellent scholar, through the teaching of Mr. Aylmer her master.

Once Mr. Roger Ascham, coming to wait on her at Broadgates in Leicestershire, found her in her chamber, reading *Phædon*-Platonis[16] in Greek, with as much delight as some gentleman would have read a merry tale in Boccace, whilst the duke her father, with the duchess, and all their household, were hunting in the park. He asked of her, how she could lose such pastime; who, smiling, answered: "I wish[17] all the sport in the park is but the shadow of what pleasure I find in this book!" adding, moreover, that one of the greatest blessings God ever gave her, was in sending her sharp parents, and a gentle school-master, which made her take delight in nothing so much as in her studies.

About this time John Dudley, duke of Northumberland, projected for the English crown. But being too low to reach it in his own person, (having no advantage of royal birth,) a match was made betwixt Guilford, his fourth son, and this lady Jane; the duke hoping so to reign in his daughter-in-law, on whom king Edward VI, by will, (passing by his own sisters,) had entailed the crown; and, not long after, that godly king, who had some defects, but few faults, (and those rather in his age than person,) came to his grave; it being uncertain whether he went, or was sent, thither. If the latter be true, "the crying of this saint under the altar," beneath which he was buried in king Henry's chapel, (without any other monument than that of his own virtues,) hath been heard long since, for avenging his blood.

Presently after, (1553,) lady Jane was proclaimed queen of England. She lifted not up her least finger to put the diadem on herself; but was only contented to sit still, whilst others endeavoured to crown her; or rather, was so far from biting at the bait of sovereignty, that unwillingly she opened her mouth to receive it.

[16] The *Phaedo* of Plato.

[17] Ascham ("Scholemaster," Arber's Reprint) has *I wis*, i.e. *surely*.

Then was the duke of Northumberland made general of an army, and sent into Suffolk to suppress the lady Mary, who there gathered men to claim the crown. This duke was appointed, out of the policy of his friend-seeming enemies, for that employment. For those who before could not endure the scorching heat of his displeasure at the council-table, durst afterwards oppose him, having gotten the screen of London-walls betwixt him and them. They also stinted his journeys every day, (thereby appointing the steps by which he was to go down to his own grave,) that he should march on very slowly, which caused his confusion. For, lingering doth tire out treacherous designs, which are to be done all on a sudden, and gives breath to loyalty to recover itself.

His army, like a sheep, left part of his fleece on every bush it came by; at every stage and corner some conveying themselves from him, till his soldiers were washed away before any storm of war fell upon them. Only some few, who were chained to the duke by their particular engagements, and some great persons, hopeless to conceal themselves, as being too big for a cover, stuck fast unto him. Thus those enterprises need a strong hand, which are thrown against the bias of people's hearts and consciences. And, not long after, the Norfolk and Suffolk Protestant gentry (loyalty always lodgeth in the same breast with true religion!) proclaimed and set up queen Mary, who got the crown by "Our Father," and held it by *Pater noster*.[18]

Then was the late queen, now lady Jane Grey, brought from a queen to a prisoner, and committed to the Tower. She made misery itself amiable by her pious and patient behaviour; adversity, her night-clothes, becoming her as well as her day-dressing, by reason of her pious deportment.

During her imprisonment, many moved her to alter her religion, and especially Mr. Feckenham, sent unto her by queen Mary.

[18] "Obtained the crown by the Protestants and held it by the Papists." —NICHOLS.

But how wisely and religiously she answered him, I refer the reader to Mr. Fox, where it is largely recorded.[19]

And because I have mentioned that book, wherein this lady's virtues are so highly commended, I am not ignorant that, of late, great disgrace hath been thrown on that author and his worthy work, as being guilty of much falsehood; chiefly, because sometimes he makes Popish doctors, well known to be rich in learning, to reason very poorly; and the best fencers of their schools, worsted and put out of their play by some country poor Protestants. But let the cavillers hereat know, that it is a great matter to have the odds of the weapon (God's word) on their side;—not to say anything of supernatural assistance given them. Sure, for the main, his book is a worthy work, (wherein the reader may rather leave than lack,) and seems to me, like Etna, always burning, whilst the smoke hath almost put out the eyes of the adverse party; and these Fox's "fire-brands" have brought much annoyance to the Romish "Philistines." But it were a miracle, if, in so voluminous a work, there were nothing to be justly reproved; so great a pomegranate, not having any rotten kernel, must only grow in Paradise. And though, perchance, he held the beam at the best advantage for the Protestant party to weigh down, yet, generally, he is a true writer, and never wilfully deceiveth, though he may sometimes be unwillingly deceived.

To return to the lady Jane: Though queen Mary, of her own disposition, was inclined finally to pardon her, yet necessity of State was such, as she must be put to death. . . . On Tower Hill (Feb. 12th, 1553) she most patiently, Christianly, and constantly yielded to God her soul, which, by a bad way, went to the best end. On whom the foresaid author (whence the rest of her life may be supplied) bestows these verses:—

Nescio tu quibus es, lector, lecturus ocellis:
Hoc scio, quòd siccis scribere non potui.

"What eyes thou read'st with, reader, know I not:
Mine were not dry, when I this story wrote."

[19] Fox's "Acts and Monuments."

She had the innocency of childhood, the beauty of youth, the solidity of middle — the gravity of old — age, and all at eighteen; the birth of a princess, the learning of a clerk, the life of a saint, yet the death of a malefactor, for her parents' offences. I confess, I never read of any canonized saint of her name, — a thing whereof some Papists are so scrupulous, that they count it an unclean and unhallowed thing to be of a name whereof never any saint was: which made that great Jesuit, Arthur Faunt, as his kinsman tells us, change his Christian name to Lawrence. But let this worthy lady pass for a saint; and let all great ladies, who bear her name, imitate her virtues; to whom I wish her inward holiness, but far more outward happiness.

Yet, lest goodness should be discouraged by this lady's infelicity, we will produce another example, which shall be of a fortunate virtue.

Book IV. Chapter XV.

The Life of Queen Elizabeth.

We intermeddle not with her description as she was a sovereign prince, too high for our pen, and performed by others already, though not by any done so fully but that still room is left for the endeavours of posterity to add thereunto. We consider her only as she was a worthy lady, her private virtues rendering her to the imitation, and her public to the admiration of all.

Her royal birth by her father's side doth comparatively make her mother-descent seem low, which otherwise, considered in itself, was very noble and honourable. As for the bundle of scandalous aspersions by some cast on her birth, they are best to be buried without once opening of them. For as the basest rascal will presume to miscall the best lord, when far enough out of his hearing; so slanderous tongues think they may run riot in railing on any, when once got out of the distance of time, and reach of confutation.

But majesty, which dieth not, will not suffer itself to be so abused, seeing the best assurance which living princes have that their memories shall be honourably continued, is founded (next to their own deserts) in the maintaining of the unstained reputation of their predecessors. Yea, Divine Justice seems herein to be a compurgator of the parents of queen Elizabeth; in that Nicholas Sanders, a Popish priest, the first raiser of these wicked reports, was accidentally famished as he roved up and down in Ireland; either because it was just he should be starved, that formerly surfeited with lying; or because that island, out of a natural antipathy against poisonous creatures, would not lend life to so venomous a slanderer.

Under the reign of her father, and brother king Edward VI, (who commonly called her his "sister Temperance,") she lived in a princely fashion. But the case was altered with her, when her sister Mary came to the crown, who ever looked upon her with a jealous eye and frowning face; chiefly, because of the difference between them in religion. For though queen Mary is said of herself not so much to have barked, yet she had under her those who did more than bite; and rather her religion, than disposition, was guilty in countenancing their cruelty by her authority.

This antipathy against her sister Elizabeth was increased with the remembrance how Catherine dowager, queen Mary's mother, was justled out of the bed of Henry VIII by Anna Boleyn, mother to queen Elizabeth; so that these two sisters were born, as I may say, not only in several, but opposite horizons; so that the elevation and bright appearing of the one inferred the necessary obscurity and depression of the other; and still queen Mary was troubled with this *fit of the mother*, which incensed her against this her half-sister.

To which two grand causes of opposition, this third may also be added, because not so generally known, though in itself of lesser consequence: Queen Mary had released Edward Courtenay, earl of Devonshire, out of the Tower, where long he had been

detained prisoner; a gentleman of a beautiful body, sweet nature, and royal descent; intending him, as it was generally conceived, to be a husband for herself. For when the said earl petitioned the queen for leave to travel, she advised him rather to marry, insuring him that no lady in the land, how high soever, would refuse him for a husband; and, urging him to make his choice where he pleased, she pointed herself out unto him as plainly as might stand with the modesty of a maid and majesty of a queen. Hereupon the young earl — whether because that his long durance had some influence on his brain, or that naturally his face was better than his head, or out of some private fancy and affection to the lady Elizabeth, or out of loyal bashfulness, not presuming to climb higher, but expecting to be called up — is said to have requested the queen for leave to marry her sister the lady Elizabeth, unhappy that his choice either went so high or no higher. For who could have spoken worse treason against Mary, (though not against the queen,) than to prefer her sister before her? And she, innocent lady, did afterwards dearly pay the score of this earl's indiscretion. For these reasons, lady Elizabeth was closely kept, and narrowly sifted, all her sister's reign, sir [Henry] Bedingfield, her keeper, using more severity towards her than his place required, yea, more than a good man should — or a wise man would — have done. No doubt, the least tripping of her foot should have cost her the losing of her head, if they could have caught her to be privy to any conspiracies. This lady as well deserved the title of "Elizabeth the Confessor," as ever Edward her ancient predecessor did. Mr. Ascham was a good schoolmaster to her, but affliction was a better; so that it is hard to say, whether she was more happy in having a crown so soon, or in having it no sooner, till affliction had first laid in her a low — and therefore a sure — foundation of humility, for highness to be afterwards built thereupon.

We bring her now from the cross to the crown; and come we now to describe the rare endowments of her mind; when, behold, her virtues almost stifle my pen, they crowd in so fast upon it.

She was an excellent scholar, understanding the Greek, and perfectly speaking the Latin: witness her extempore speech, in answer to the Polish ambassador, and another at Cambridge, *Et si fœminilis iste meus pudor*,[20] (for so it began,) elegantly making the word *fœminilis:* and well might she mint one new word, who did refine so much new gold and silver. Good skill she had in the French and Italian, using interpreters not for need, but state. She was a good poet in English, and fluently made verses. In her time of persecution, when a Popish priest pressed her very hardly to declare her opinion concerning the presence of Christ in the sacrament, she truly and warily presented her judgment in these verses: —

"'Twas God the Word that spake it,
He took the bread and brake it;
And what the Word did make it,
That I believe, and take it."

And though, perchance, some may say, "This was but the best of shifts, and the worst of answers, because the distinct manner of the presence must be believed;" yet none can deny it to have been a wise return to an adversary, who lay at wait for all advantages. Nor was her poetic vein less happy in Latin.

When, a little before the Spanish invasion in eighty-eight, [1588,] the Spanish ambassador, after a larger representation of his master's demands, had summed up the effect thereof in a tetrastich, she instantly in one verse rejoined her answer. We will presume to English both, though confessing the Latin loseth lustre by the translation.

Te veto ne pergas bello defendere Belgas:
Quæ Dracus eripuit nunc restituantur oportet:
Quas pater evertit jubeo te condere cellas;
Relligio Papæ fac restituatur ad unguem.

"These to you are our commands:
Send no help to th' Netherlands:
Of the treasure took by Drake,
Restitution you must make:

[20] *And if that womanly modesty of mine.*

And those abbeys build anew,
Which your father overthrew:
If for any peace you hope,
In all points restore the Pope."

The Queen's extempore return: —

Ad Græcas, bone rex, fient mandata, Calendas.[21]

"Worthy king, know, this your will
At latter Lammas we'll fulfil."

Her piety to God was exemplary; none more constant or devout in private prayers; very attentive also at sermons, wherein she was better affected with soundness of matter, than quaintness of expression. She could not well digest the affected over-elegancy of such as prayed for her by the title of "Defendress of the Faith," and not the "Defender"; it being no false construction, to apply a masculine word to so heroic a spirit.

She was very devout in returning thanks to God for her constant and continual preservations; for one traitor's stab was scarce put by, before another took aim at her. But as if the poisons of treason, by custom, were turned natural unto her, by God's protection they did her no harm. In any design of consequence, she loved to be long and well advised; but where her resolutions once seized, she would never let go her hold, according to her motto, *Semper eadem.*[22] By her temperance she improved that stock of health which nature bestowed on her, using little wine and less physic. Her continence from pleasure was admirable; and she the paragon of spotless chastity, whatever some Popish priests (who count all virginity hid under a nun's veil) have feigned to the contrary. The best is, *their* words are no slander *whose* words are all slander; so given to railing that they must be dumb if they do not blaspheme magistrates. One Jesuit[23] made this

[21] *Your commands, good king, will be fulfilled at the Greek kalends,* i.e. never.

[22] *Always the same.*

[23] Edmond Campian.

false anagram on her name, *Elizabeth*, JESABEL; false both in matter and manner. For, allow it the abatement of H, (as anagrams must sue in chancery for moderate favour,) yet was it both unequal and ominous that T, a solid letter, should be omitted, — the presage of the gallows whereon this anagrammatist was afterwards justly executed.

Yea, let the testimony of Pope Sixtus V. himself be believed, who professed that, amongst all the princes in Christendom, he found but two who were worthy to bear command, had they not been stained with heresy; namely, Henry IV, king of France, and Elizabeth, queen of England. And we may presume that the Pope, if commending his enemy, is therein infallible. We come to her death, the discourse whereof was more welcome to her from the mouth of her private confessor than from a public preacher; and she loved rather to tell herself, than to be told, of her mortality; because the open mention thereof made (as she conceived) her subjects divide their loyalty betwixt the present and the future prince. We need look into no other cause of her sickness than old age, being seventy years old, (David's age,) to which no king of England since the Conquest did attain. Her weakness was increased by her removal from London to Richmond in a cold winter day, sharp enough to pierce through those who were armed with health and youth. Also melancholy (the worst natural parasite, whosoever feeds him shall never be rid of his company!) much afflicted her, being given over to sadness and silence.

Then prepared she herself for another world, being more constant in prayer and pious exercises than ever before. Yet spake she very little to any, sighing out more than she said, and making still music to God in her heart.

And as the red rose, though outwardly not so fragrant, is inwardly far more cordial than the damask, being more thrifty of its sweetness, and reserving it in itself; so the religion of this dying queen was most turned inward, in soliloquies betwixt God and her own soul, though she wanted not outward expressions thereof. When her speech failed her, she spake with her heart, tears, eyes,

hands and other signs, so commending herself to God, the best Interpreter, who understands what his saints desire to say. Thus died queen Elizabeth; whilst living, the first maid on earth; and when dead, the second in heaven.

Surely, the kingdom had died with their queen, had not the fainting spirits thereof been refreshed by the coming-in of gracious king James. She was of person, tall: of hair and complexion, fair, well-favoured, but high-nosed; of limb and feature, neat; of a stately and majestic deportment. She had a piercing eye, wherewith she used to touch what metal [mettle] strangers were made of, who came into her presence. But as she counted it a pleasant conquest, with her majestic look to dash strangers out of countenance; so she was merciful in pursuing those whom she overcame; and afterwards would cherish and comfort them with her smiles, if perceiving towardliness and an ingenuous modesty in them. She much affected rich and costly apparel; and if ever jewels had just cause to be proud, it was with her wearing them.

VII.

JOHN MILTON.

(1608–1674.)

AREOPAGITICA;

A SPEECH OF MR. JOHN MILTON FOR THE LIBERTY OF UNLICENC'D PRINTING, TO THE PARLAMENT OF ENGLAND.

[Written in 1644.]

Lords and Commons of England, consider what Nation it is whereof ye are and whereof ye are the governours: a Nation not slow and dull, but of a quick, ingenious, and piercing spirit, acute to invent, subtle and sinewy to discours, not beneath the reach of any point the highest that human capacity can soar to. Therefore the studies of learning in her deepest Sciences have bin so ancient, and so eminent among us, that Writers of good antiquity and ablest judgement have bin perswaded that ev'n the school of *Pythagoras*, and the *Persian* wisdom took beginning from the old Philosophy of this Iland. And that wise and civill Roman, *Julius Agricola*, who govern'd once here for *Cæsar*, preferr'd the naturall wits of Britain before the labour'd studies of the French. Nor is it for nothing that the grave and frugal *Transilvania* sends out yearly from as farre as the mountainous borders of *Russia*, and beyond the *Hercynian* wilderness, not their youth, but their stay'd men, to learn our language, and our *theologic* arts. Yet that which is above all this, the favour and the love of heav'n we have great argument to think in a peculiar manner propitious and propending[1] towards us. Why else was this Nation chos'n before any other, that out of her as out of *Sion* should be proclaim'd and

[1] inclining.

sounded forth the first tidings and trumpet of Reformation to all *Europ.* And had it not been the obstinat perversenes of our Prelats against the divine and admirable spirit of *Wickleff*, to suppresse him as a schismatic and *innovator*, perhaps neither the *Bohemian Husse* and *Jerom*, no nor the name of *Luther*, or of *Calvin* had bin ever known: the glory of reforming all our neighbours had been compleatly ours. But now, as our obdurat Clergy have with violence demean'd[2] the matter, we are become hitherto the latest and the backwardest Schollers, of whom[3] God offer'd to have made us the teachers. Now once again by all concurrence of signs, and by the generall instinct of holy and devout men, as they daily and solemnly expresse their thoughts, God is decreeing to begin some new and great period in his Church, ev'n to the reforming of Reformation it self: what does he then but reveal Himself to his servants, and as his manner is, first to his Englishmen; I say as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the method of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast City; a City of refuge, the mansion house of liberty, encompast and surrounded with his protection; the shop of warre hath not there more anvils and hammers waking, to fashion out the plates[4] and instruments of armed Justice in defence of beleaguer'd Truth, then there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and idea's wherewith to present, as with their homage and their fealty the approaching Reformation: others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement. What could a man require more from a Nation so pliant and so prone to seek after knowledge? What wants there to such a towardly and pregnant soile, but wise and faithfull labourers, to make a knowing people, a Nation of Prophets, of Sages, and of Worthies? We reck'n more then five months yet to harvest; there need not be five weeks, had we but eyes to lift up, the fields are white already. Where there is much desire to learn, there of necessity will be

[2] treated. [3] [of those] of whom. [4] breastplates.

much arguing, much writing, many opinions; for opinion in good men is but knowledge in the making. Under these fantastic terrors of sect and schism, we wrong the earnest and zealous thirst after knowledge and understanding which God hath stirr'd up in this City. What some lament of, we rather should rejoice at, should rather praise this pious forwardness among men, to reassume the ill-deputed care of their Religion into their own hands again. A little generous prudence, a little forbearance of one another, and som grain of charity might win all these diligences to joyn and unite in one generall and brotherly search after Truth; could we but forgoe this Prelaticall tradition of crowding free consciences and Christian liberties into canons and precepts of men. I doubt not, if some great and worthy stranger should come among us, wise to discern the mould and temper of a people, and how to govern it, observing the high hopes and aims, the diligent alacrity of our extended thoughts and reasonings in the pursuance of truth and freedom, but that he would cry out as *Pirrhus* did, admiring the Roman docility and courage, if such were my *Epirots*, I would not despair the greatest design that could be attempted to make a Church or Kingdom happy. Yet these are the men cry'd out against for schismaticks and sectaries; as if, while the Temple of the Lord was building, some cutting, some squaring the marble, others hewing the cedars, there should be a sort of irrationall men who could not consider there must be many schisms and many dissections made in the quarry and in the timber, ere the house of God can be built. And when every stone is laid artfully together, it cannot be united into a continuity, it can but be contiguous in this world; neither can every peece of the building be of one form; nay rather the perfection consists in this, that out of many moderat varieties and brotherly dissimilitudes that are not vastly disproportionall arises the goodly and the graceful symmetry that commends the whole pile and structure. Let us therefore be more considerat builders, more wise in spirituall architecture, when great reformation is expected. For now the time seems come, wherein *Moses* the great Prophet may

sit in heav'n rejoycing to see that memorable and glorious wish of his fulfill'd, when not only our sev'nty Elders, but all the Lords people are become Prophets. No marvell then though some men, and some good men too perhaps, but young in goodnesse, as *Joshua* then was, envy them. They fret, and out of their own weaknes are in agony, lest those divisions and subdivisions will undoe us. The adversarie again applauds, and waits the hour; when they have brancht themselves out, saith he, small anough into parties and partitions, then will be our time. Fool! he sees not the firm root, out of which we all grow, though into branches: nor will beware untill hee see our small divided maniples[5] cutting through at every angle of his ill united and unwieldy brigade. And that we are to hope better of all these supposed sects and schisms, and that we shall not need that solicitude, honest perhaps though over timorous, of them that vex in this behalf, but shall laugh in the end at those malicious applauders of our differences, I have these reasons to perswade me.

First, when a City shall be as it were besieg'd and blockt about, her navigable river infested, inrodes and incursions round, defiance and battell oft rumor'd to be marching up ev'n to her walls, and suburb trenches, that then the people, or the greater part, more than at other times, wholly tak'n up with the study of highest and most important matters to be reform'd, should be disputing, reasoning, reading, inventing, discoursing, ev'n to a rarity, and admiration, things not before discourst or writ'n of, argues first a singular good will, contentednesse and confidence in your prudent foresight and safe government, Lords and Commons; and from thence derives it self to a gallant bravery and well grounded contempt of their enemies, as if there were no small number of as great spirits among us, as his was, who, when Rome was nigh besieged by *Hanibal*, being in the City, bought that peece of ground at no cheap rate, whereon *Hanibal* himself encampt his own regiment. Next it is a lively and cherfull presage

[5] companies.

of our happy success and victory. For as in a body, when the blood is fresh, the spirits pure and vigorous, not only to vital, but to rationall faculties, and those in the acutest, and the pertest[6] operations of wit and suttlety, it argues in what good plight and constitution the body is, so when the cheerfulnesse of the people is so sprightly up, as that it has not only wherewith to guard well its own freedom and safety, but to spare, and to bestow upon the solidest and sublimest points of controversie, and new invention, it betok'ns us not degenerated, nor drooping to a fatal decay, but casting off the old and wrincl'd skin of corruption to outlive these pangs and wax young again, entring the glorious waies of Truth and prosperous vertue destined to become great and honourable in these latter ages. Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant Nation rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks: Methinks I see her as an Eagle muing[7] her mighty youth, and kindling her undazl'd eyes at the full midday beam; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heav'nly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about, amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticat a year of sects and schisms.

What should ye doe then, should ye suppresse all this flowry crop of knowledge and new light sprung up and yet springing daily in this City, should ye set an *Oligarchy* of twenty ingrossers[8] over it, to bring a famin upon our minds again, when we shall know nothing but what is measur'd to us by their bushel? Beleeve it, Lords and Commons, they who counsell ye to such a suppressing, doe as good as bid ye suppresse yourselves; and I will soon shew how. If it be desir'd to know the immediat cause of all this free writing and free speaking, there cannot be assign'd a truer then your own mild, and free, and human government; it is the liberty, Lords and Commons, which your own valorous and happy counsels have purchast us, liberty which is the nurse of all

[6] proudest, highest. [7] renewing by moulting. [8] licensers of the press.

great wits; this is that which hath rarify'd and enlightn'd our spirits like the influence of heav'n; this is that which hath enfranchis'd, enlarg'd and lifted up our apprehensions degrees above themselves. Ye cannot make us now lesse capable, lesse knowing, lesse eagarly pursuing of the truth, unlesse ye first make your selves, that made us so, lesse the lovers, lesse the founders of our true liberty. We can grow ignorant again, brutish, formall, and slavish, as ye found us; but you then must first become that which ye cannot be, oppressive, arbitrary, and tyrannous, as they were from whom ye have free'd us. That our hearts are now more capacious, our thoughts more erected to the search and expectation of greatest and exactest things, is the issue of your own vertu propagated in us; ye cannot suppresse that unlesse ye reinforce an abrogated and mercilesse law, that fathers may dispatch at will their own children. And who shall then sticke closest to ye, and excite others? not he who takes up armes for cote and conduct,[9] and his four nobles of Danegelt.[10] Although I dispraise not the defence of just immunities, yet love my peace better, if that were all. Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue freely according to conscience, above all liberties.

What would be best advis'd then, if it be found so hurtfull and so unequall to suppresse opinions for the newnes, or the unsutablenes to a customary acceptance, will not be my task to say; I only shall repeat what I have learnt from one of your own honourable number, a right noble and pious lord, who[11] had he not sacrific'd his life and fortunes to the Church and Commonwealth, we had not now mist and bewayl'd a worthy and undoubted patron of this argument. Ye know him I am sure; yet I for honours sake, and may it be eternall to him, shall name him, the Lord *Brook*. He writing of Episcopacy, and by the way treating of

[9] "To resist illegal taxation for the clothing and conveyance of troops, and also for the provision of a navy." — HALES.

[10] Shipmoney; originally money levied by Ethelred II. to buy off the Danes.

[11] No predicate, as often in Elizabethan English.

sects and schisms, left Ye his vote, or rather now the last words of his dying charge, which I know will ever be of dear and honour'd regard with Ye, so full of meeknes and breathing charity, that next to his last testament, who bequeath'd love and peace to his Disciples, I cannot call to mind where I have read or heard words more mild and peacefull. He there exhorts us to hear with patience and humility those, however they be miscall'd, that desire to live purely, in such a use of Gods Ordinances, as the best guidance of their conscience gives them, and to tolerat them, though in some disconformity to our selves. The book it self will tell us more at large being publisht to the world, and dedicated to the Parlament by him who both for his life and for his death deserves that what advice he left be not laid by without perusall.

And now the time in speciall is, by priviledge to write and speak what may help to the furder discussing of matters in agitation. The Temple of *Janus* with his two *controversal* faces might now not unsignificantly be set open. And though all the windes of doctrin were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously by licencing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the wors in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. He who hears what praying there is for light and clearer knowledge to be sent down among us, would think of other matters to be constituted beyond the discipline of *Geneva*, fram'd and fabric't already to our hands. Yet when the new light which we beg for shines in upon us, there be who envy and oppose, if it come not first in at their casements. What a collusion is this, whenas we are exhorted by the wise man to use diligence, *to seek for wisdom as for hidd'n treasures* early and late, that another order shall enjoyn us to know nothing but by statute! When a man hath bin labouring the hardest labour in the deep mines of knowledge, hath furnisht out his findings in all their equipage, drawn forth his reasons as it were a battell raung'd, scatter'd and defeated all objections in his way, calls out his

adversary into the plain, offers him the advantage of wind and sun, if he please; only that he may try the matter by dint of argument, for his opponents then to sculk, to lay ambushments, to keep a narrow bridge of licencing where the challenger should passe, though it be valour anough in shouldiership, is but weaknes and cowardise in the wars of Truth. For who knows not that Truth is strong next to the Almighty? She needs no policies, no stratagems, no licencings to make her victorious, those are the shifts and the defences that error uses against her power: give her but room, and do not bind her when she sleeps, for then she speaks not true, as the old *Proteus* did, who spake oracles only when he was caught and bound, but then rather she turns herself into all shapes except her own, and perhaps tunes her voice according to the time, as *Micaiah* did before Ahab, untill she be adjur'd into her own likenes. Yet is it not impossible that she may have more shapes then one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike her self? What but a vain shadow else is the abolition of *those ordinances, that hand writing nayl'd to the crosse*, what great purchase is this Christian liberty which *Paul* so often boasts of? His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day or regards it not, may doe either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisie to be ever judging one another? I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks; the ghost of a linnen decency yet haunts us. We stumble and are impatient at the least dividing of one visible congregation from another, though it be not in fundamentalls; and through our forwardnes to suppresse, and our backwardnes to recover any enthrall'd peece of truth out of the gripe of custom, we care not to keep truth separated from truth, which is the fiercest rent and disunion of all. We doe not see that while we still affect by all means a rigid externall formality, we may as soon fall again into a grosse conforming stupidity, a stark and dead congealment of

wood and hay and stubble forc't and frozen together, which is more to the sudden degenerating of a Church then many *subdichotomies*[12] of petty schisms. Not that I can think well of every light separation, or that all in a Church is to be expected *gold and silver and pretious stones:* it is not possible for man to sever the wheat from the tares, the good fish from the other frie; that must be the Angels Ministery at the end of mortall things. Yet if all cannot be of one mind, as who looks they should be? this doubtles is more wholsome, more prudent, and more Christian that many be tolerated rather than all compell'd. I mean not tolerated Popery, and open superstition, which as it extirpats all religions and civill supremacies, so it self should be extirpat, provided first that all charitable and compassionat means be us'd to win and regain the weak and misled: that also which is impious or evil absolutely either against faith or maners no law can possibly permit, that intends not to unlaw it self: but those neighboring differences, or rather indifferences, are what I speak of, whether in some point of doctrine or of discipline, which though they may be many, yet need not interrupt *the unity of Spirit*, if we could but find among us *the bond of peace*. In the mean while if any one would write, and bring his helpfull hand to the slow-moving Reformation we labour under, if Truth have spok'n to him before others, or but seem'd at least to speak, who hath so bejesuited us that we should trouble that man with asking licence to doe so worthy a deed? and not consider this, that if it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited then truth it self; whose first appearance to our eyes blear'd and dimm'd with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplausible then many errors, ev'n as the person is of many a great man slight and contemptible to see to. And what do they tell us vainly of new opinions, when this very opinion of theirs, that none must be heard but whom they like, is the worst and newest opinion of all others;[13] and is the chief cause why sects

[12] subdivisions.

[13] Survival of the Elizabethan idiom, which has lasted to the present century.

and schisms doe so much abound, and true knowledge is kept at distance from us? Besides yet a greater danger which is in it. For when God shakes a Kingdome with strong and healthfull commotions to a generall reforming, 'tis not untrue that many sectaries and false teachers are then busiest in seducing; but yet more true it is, that God then raises to his own work men of rare abilities, and more then common industry not only to look back and revise what hath bin taught heretofore, but to gain furder and goe on, some new enlightn'd steps in the discovery of truth. For such is the order of Gods enlightning his Church, to dispense and deal out by degrees his beam, so as our earthly eyes may best sustain it. Neither is God appointed and confin'd, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak; for he sees not as man sees, chooses not as man chooses, lest we should devote our selves again to set places, and assemblies, and outward callings of men; planting our faith one while in the old Convocation house, and another while in the Chappell at Westminster; when all the faith and religion that shall be there canoniz'd, is not sufficient without plain convincement, and the charity of patient instruction to supple the least bruise of conscience, to edifie the meanest Christian, who desires to walk in the Spirit, and not in the letter of human trust, for all the number of voices that can be there made, no, though *Harry* the 7. himself there, with all his leige tombs about him, should lend them voices from the dead, to swell their number. And if the men be erroneous who appear to be the leading schismaticks, what witholds us but our sloth, our self-will, and distrust in the right cause, that we doe not give them gentle meetings and gentle dismissions, that we debate not and examin the matter thoroughly with liberall and frequent audience; if not for their sakes, yet for our own, seeing no man who hath tasted learning, but will confesse the many waies of profiting by those who not contented with stale receits are able to manage, and set forth new positions to the world? And were they but as the dust and cinders of our feet, so long as in that notion they may serve to polish and brighten the armoury

of Truth, ev'n for that respect they were not utterly to be cast away. But if they be of those whom God hath fitted for the speciall use of these times with eminent and ample gifts, and those perhaps neither among the Priests, nor among the Pharisees, and we in the hast of a precipitant zeal shall make no distinction, but resolve to stop their mouths, because we fear they come with new and dangerous opinions, as we commonly fore-judge them ere we understand them, no lesse then woe to us, while, thinking thus to defend the Gospel, we are found the persecutors.

There have bin not a few since the beginning of this Parlament, both of the Presbytery and others who by their unlicen[c]t books to the contempt of an *Imprimatur*[14] first broke that triple ice clung about our hearts, and taught the people to see day: I hope that none of those were the perswaders to renew upon us this bondage which they themselves have wrought so much good by contemning. But if neither the check that *Moses* gave to young *Joshua*, nor the countermand which our Saviour gave to young *John*, who was so ready to prohibit those whom he thought unlicenc't, be not anough to admonish our Elders how unacceptable to God their testy mood of prohibiting is, if neither their own remembrance what evill hath abounded in the Church by this lett[15] of licencing, and what good they themselves have begun by transgressing it, be not anough, but that they will perswade, and execute the most *Dominican* part of the Inquisition over us, and are already with one foot in the stirrup so active at suppressing, it would be no unequall distribution in the first place to suppresse the suppressers themselves; whom the change of their condition hath puft up, more then their late experience of harder times hath made wise.

And as for regulating the Presse, let no man think to have the honour of advising ye better then your selves have done in that Order publisht next before this, that no book be Printed, unlesse the Printers and the Authors name, or at least the Printers, be

[14] license to print. [15] hindrance.

register'd. Those which otherwise come forth, if they be found mischievous and libellous, the fire and the executioner will be the timeliest and the most effectuall remedy that mans prevention can use. For this *authentic* Spanish policy[16] of licencing books, if I have said ought, will prove the most unlicenc't book it self within a short while; and was the immediat image of a Star-chamber decree to that purpose made in those very times when that Court did the rest of those her pious works, for which she is now fall'n from the Starres with *Lucifer*. Whereby ye may guesse what kinde of State prudence, what love of the people, what care of Religion, or good manners there was at the contriving, although with singular hypocrisie it pretended to bind books to their good behaviour. And how it got the upper hand of your precedent Order so well constituted before, if we may beleeve those men whose profession gives them cause to enquire most, it may be doubted there was in it the fraud of some old *patentees* and *monopolizers* in the trade of book-selling; who under pretence of the poor in their Company not to be defrauded, and the just retaining of each man his severall copy, which God forbid should be gainsaid, brought divers glosing colours to the House, which were indeed but colours, and serving to no end except it be to exercise a superiority over their neighbours, men who doe not therefore labour in an honest profession to which learning is indetted, that they should be made other mens vassals. Another end is thought was aym'd at by some of them in procuring by petition this Order, that having power in their hands, malignant books might the easier scape abroad, as the event shews. But of these *Sophisms* and *Elenchs*[17] of marchandize I skill not: This I know, that errors in a good government and in a bad are equally almost incident; for what Magistrate may not be mis-inform'd, and much the sooner, if liberty of Printing be reduc't into the

[16] "policy genuinely and really Spanish." — See HALES's note.

[17] "These fallacious arguments urged by the booksellers and their refutations." — HALES.

power of a few; but to redresse willingly and speedily what hath bin err'd, and in highest autority to esteem a plain advertisement more then others have done a sumptuous bribe, is a vertue (honour'd Lords and Commons) answerable to Your highest actions, and whereof none can participat but greatest and wisest men.

VIII.

JEREMY TAYLOR.

(1613-1667.)

TWENTY-SEVEN SERMONS PREACHED AT GOLDEN GROVE.

[Written in 1651.]

SERMON IX.

THE FAITH AND PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS; OR THE RIGHTEOUS CAUSE OPPRESSED.

PART I.

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel of God?

And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? — 1 Peter iv. 17, 18.

So long as the world lived by sense, and discourses of natural reason, as they were abated with human infirmities, and not at all heightened by the Spirit and divine revelations; so long men took their accounts of good and bad by their being prosperous or unfortunate: and amongst the basest and most ignorant of men, that only was accounted honest which was profitable; and he only wise, that was rich; and those men beloved of God, who received from him all that might satisfy their lust, their ambition, or their revenge.

— Fatis accede, Deisque,
Et cole felices, miseros fuge: sidera terrâ
Ut distant, ut flamma mari, sic utile recto.[1]

[1] *Approach the fates and the gods, and honor the happy, flee the unhappy; as the stars are distant from the earth, as fire from water, so is the useful from the right.* — LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, VIII. 486.

But because God sent wise men into the world, and they were treated rudely by the world, and exercised with evil accidents, and this seemed so great a discouragement to virtue, that even these wise men were more troubled to reconcile virtue and misery, than to reconcile their affections to the suffering; God was pleased to enlighten their reason with a little beam of faith, or else heightened their reason by wiser principles than those of vulgar understandings, and taught them in the clear glass of faith, or the dim perspective of philosophy, to look beyond the cloud, and there to spy that there stood glories behind their curtain, to which they could not come but by passing through the cloud, and being wet with the dew of heaven and the waters of affliction. And according as the world grew more enlightened by faith, so it grew more dark with mourning and sorrows. God sometimes sent a light of fire, and a pillar of a cloud, and the brightness of an angel, and the lustre of a star, and the sacrament of a rainbow, to guide his people through their portion of sorrows, and to lead them through troubles to rest: but as the Sun of Righteousness approached towards the chamber of the east, and sent the harbingers of light peeping through the curtains of the night, and leading on the day of faith and brightest revelation; so God sent degrees of trouble upon wise and good men, that now, in the same degree in the which the world lives by faith, and not by sense, in the same degree they might be able to live in virtue even while she lived in trouble, and not reject so great a beauty, because she goes in mourning and hath a black cloud of cyprus drawn before her face. Literally thus: God first entertained their services, and allured and prompted on the infirmities of the infant-world by temporal prosperity; but by degrees changed his method; and, as men grew stronger in the knowledge of God, and the expectations of heaven, so they grew weaker in their fortunes, more afflicted in their bodies, more abated in their expectations, more subject to their enemies, and were to endure the contradiction of sinners, and the immission of the sharpnesses of Providence and divine economy.

First, Adam was placed in a garden of health and pleasure, from which when he fell, he was only tied to enter into the covenant of natural sorrows, which he and all his posterity till the flood ran through: but in all that period they had the whole wealth of the earth before them; they needed not fight for empires, or places for their cattle to graze in; they lived long, and felt no want, no slavery, no tyranny, no war; and the evils that happened, were single, personal, and natural; and no violences were then done, but they were like those things which the law calls 'rare contingencies;' for which as the law can now take no care and make no provisions, so then there was no law, but men lived free, and rich, and long, and they exercised no virtues but natural, and knew no felicity but natural: and so long their prosperity was just as was their virtue, because it was a natural instrument towards all that which they knew of happiness. But this public easiness and quiet, the world turned into sin; and unless God did compel men to do themselves good, they would undo themselves: and then God broke in upon them with a flood, and destroyed that generation, that he might begin the government of the world upon a new stock, and bind virtue upon men's spirits by new bands, endeared to them by new hopes and fears.

Then God made new laws, and gave to princes the power of the sword, and men might be punished to death in certain cases, and man's life was shortened, and slavery was brought into the world and the state of servants: and then war began, and evils multiplied upon the face of the earth; in which it is naturally certain that they that are most violent and injurious, prevailed upon the weaker and more innocent; and every tyranny that began from Nimrod to this day, and every usurper, was a peculiar argument to shew that God began to teach the world virtue by suffering; and that therefore he suffered tyrannies and usurpations to be in the world, and to be prosperous, and the rights of men to be snatched away from the owners, that the world might be established in potent and settled governments, and the sufferers be taught all the passive virtues of the soul. For so God brings

good out of evil, turning tyranny into the benefits of government, and violence into virtue, and sufferings into rewards. And this was the second change of the world: personal miseries were brought in upon Adam and his posterity, as a punishment of sin in the first period; and in the second, public evils were brought in by tyrants and usurpers, and God suffered them as the first elements of virtue, men being just newly put to school to infant sufferings. But all this was not much.

Christ's line was not yet drawn forth; it began not to appear in what family the King of sufferings should descend, till Abraham's time; and therefore, till then there were no greater sufferings than what I have now reckoned. But when Abraham's family was chosen from among the many nations, and began to belong to God by a special right, and he was designed to be the father of the Messias; then God found out a new way to try him, even with a sound affliction, commanding him to offer his beloved Isaac; but this was accepted, and being intended by Abraham, was not intended by God; for this was a type of Christ, and therefore was also but a type of sufferings. And excepting the sufferings of the old periods, and the sufferings of nature, and accident, we see no change made for a long time after; but God having established a law in Abraham's family, did build it upon promises of health, and peace, and victory, and plenty, and riches; and so long as they did not prevaricate[2] the law of their God, so long they were prosperous: but God kept a remnant of Canaanites in the land, like a rod held over them, to vex or to chastise them into obedience, in which while they persevered, nothing could hurt them; and that saying of David needs no other sense but the letter of its own expression, "I have been young, and now am old; and yet I never saw the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread." The godly generally were prosperous, and a good cause seldom had an ill end, and a good man never died an ill death, — till the law had spent a great part of its time, and it descended

[2] corrupt.

towards its declension and period. But, that the great Prince of sufferings might not appear upon his stage of tragedies without some forerunners of sorrow, God was pleased to choose out some good men, and honour them, by making them to become little images of suffering. Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Zachariah, were martyrs of the law; but these were single deaths: Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego, were thrown into a burning furnace, and Daniel into a den of lions, and Susanna was accused for adultery; but these were but little arrests of the prosperity of the godly. As the time drew nearer that Christ should be manifest, so the sufferings grew bigger and more numerous: and Antiochus raised up a sharp persecution in the time of the Maccabees, in which many passed through the red sea of blood into the bosom of Abraham; and then Christ came. And that was the third period in which the changed method of God's providence was perfected: for Christ was to do his great work by sufferings, and by sufferings was to enter into blessedness; and by his passion he was made Prince of the catholic church, and as our head was, so must the members be. God made the same covenant with us that he did with his most holy Son, and Christ obtained no better conditions for us than for himself; that was not to be looked for; "The servant must not be above his master; it is well if he be as his master; if the world persecuted him, they will also persecute us:" and "from the days of John the Baptist, the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force;" not 'the violent doers,' but 'the sufferers of violence;' for though the old law was established in the provinces of temporal prosperity; yet the Gospel is founded in temporal adversity; it is directly a covenant of sufferings and sorrows; for now "the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God." That is the sense and design of the text; and I intend it as a direct antimony[3] to the common persuasions of tyrannous, carnal, and vicious men, who reckon nothing good but what is prosperous: for though that

[3] antidote.

proposition had many degrees of truth in the beginning of the law, yet the case is now altered, God hath established its contradictory; and now every good man must look for persecution, and every good cause must expect to thrive by the sufferings and patience of holy persons: and, as men do well, and suffer evil, so they are dear to God; and whom he loves most, he afflicts most, and does this with a design of the greatest mercy in the world.

1. Then, the state of the Gospel is a state of sufferings, not of temporal prosperities. This was foretold by the prophets: "A fountain shall go out of the house of the Lord '*et irrigabit torrentem spinarum*' (so it is in the Vulgar Latin), and it shall water the torrent of thorns," that is, the state or time of the Gospel, which, like a torrent, shall carry all the world before it, and, like a torrent, shall be fullest in ill weather; and by its banks shall grow nothing but thorns and briers, sharp afflictions, temporal infelicities, and persecution. This sense of the words is more fully explained in the book of the prophet Isaiah. "Upon the ground of my people shall thorns and briers come up; how much more in all the houses of the city of rejoicing?" Which prophecy is the same in the style of the prophets, that my text is in the style of the Apostles. The house of God shall be watered with the dew of heaven, and there shall spring up briers in it: 'Judgment must begin there;' but how much more 'in the houses of the city of rejoicing?' how much more amongst 'them that are at ease in Sion,' that serve their desires, that satisfy their appetites, that are given over to their own heart's lust, that so serve themselves that they never serve God, that 'dwell in the city of rejoicing?' They are like Dives, whose portion was in this life, 'who went in fine linen, and fared deliciously every day:' they, indeed, trample upon their briers and thorns, and suffer them not to grow in their houses; but the roots are in the ground, and they are reserved for fuel of wrath in the day of everlasting burning. Thus, you see, it was prophesied, now see how it was performed; Christ was the captain of our sufferings, and he began.

He entered into the world with all the circumstances of poverty. He had a star to illustrate his birth; but a stable for his bedchamber, and a manger for his cradle. The angels sang hymns when he was born; but he was cold and cried, uneasy and unprovided. He lived long in the trade of a carpenter; he, by whom God made the world, had, in his first years, the business of a mean and ignoble trade. He did good wherever he went, and almost wherever he went, was abused. He deserved heaven for his obedience, but found a cross in his way thither: and if ever any man had reason to expect fair usages from God, and to be dandled in the lap of ease, softness, and a prosperous fortune, he it was only that could deserve that, or anything that can be good. But after he had chosen to live a life of virtue, of poverty, and labour, he entered into a state of death; whose shame and trouble were great enough to pay for the sins of the whole world. And I shall choose to express this mystery in the words of Scripture. He died not by a single or a sudden death, but he was the 'Lamb slain from the beginning of the world:' for he was massacred in Abel, saith St. Paulinus; he was tossed upon the waves of the sea in the person of Noah; it was he that went out of his country, when Abraham was called from Charran, and wandered from his native soil; he was offered up in Isaac, persecuted in Jacob, betrayed in Joseph, blinded in Samson, affronted in Moses, sawed in Isaiah, cast into the dungeon with Jeremiah: for all these were types of Christ suffering. And then his passion continued even after his resurrection. For it is he that suffers in all his members; it is he that 'endures the contradiction of all sinners;' it is he that is 'the Lord of life, and is crucified again, and put to open shame' in all the sufferings of his servants, and sins of rebels, and defiances of apostates and renegadoes, and violence of tyrants, and injustice of usurpers, and the persecutions of his church. It is he that is stoned in St. Stephen, flayed in the person of St. Bartholomew; he was roasted upon St. Laurence's gridiron, exposed to lions in St. Ignatius, burnt in St. Polycarp, frozen in the lake where stood forty martyrs of Cappadocia. "*Unigenitus enim Dei ad*

peragendum mortis suæ sacramentum consummavit omne genus humanarum passionum," said St. Hilary; "The sacrament of Christ's death is not to be accomplished but by suffering all the sorrows of humanity."

All that Christ came for was, or was mingled with, sufferings; for all those little joys which God sent, either to recreate his person, or to illustrate his office, were abated, or attended with afflictions; God being more careful to establish in him the covenant of sufferings, than to refresh his sorrows. Presently after the angels had finished their hallelujahs, he was forced to fly to save his life; and the air became full of the shrieks of the desolate mothers of Bethlehem for their dying babes. God had no sooner made him illustrious with a voice from heaven, and the descent of the Holy Ghost upon him in the waters of baptism, but he was delivered over to be tempted and assaulted by the devil in the wilderness. His transfiguration was a bright ray of glory; but then also he entered into a cloud, and was told a sad story what he was to suffer at Jerusalem. And upon Palm Sunday, when he rode triumphantly into Jerusalem, and was adorned with the acclamations of a King and a God, he wet the palms with his tears, sweeter than the drops of manna, or the little pearls of heaven, that descended upon Mount Hermon; weeping, in the midst of this triumph, over obstinate, perishing, and malicious Jerusalem. For this Jesus was like the rainbow, which God set in the clouds as a sacrament to confirm a promise, and establish a grace; he was half made of the glories of the light, and half of the moisture of a cloud; in his best days he was but half triumph and half sorrow: he was sent to tell of his Father's mercies, and that God intended to spare us; but appeared not but in the company or in the retinue of a shower, and of foul weather. But I need not tell that Jesus, beloved of God, was a suffering person: that which concerns this question most, is, that he made for us a covenant of sufferings: his doctrines were such as expressly and by consequent enjoin and suppose sufferings, and a state of affliction; his very promises were sufferings; his beatitudes were sufferings; his

rewards, and his arguments to invite men to follow him, were only taken from sufferings in this life, and the reward of sufferings hereafter.

For if we sum up the commandments of Christ, we shall find humility, — mortification, — self-denial, — repentance, — renouncing the world, — mourning, — taking up the cross, — dying for him, — patience and poverty, — to stand in the chiefest rank of Christian precepts, and in the direct order to heaven: "He that will be my disciple, must deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." We must follow him that was crowned with thorns and sorrows, him that was drenched in Cedron, nailed upon the cross, that deserved all good, and suffered all evil: that is the sum of Christian religion, as it distinguishes from all religions in the world. To which we may add the express precept recorded by St. James; "Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy into weeping." You see the commandments: will you also see the promises? These they are. "In the world ye shall have tribulation; in me, ye shall have peace: — Through many tribulations ye shall enter into heaven: — He that loseth father and mother, wives and children, houses and lands, for my name's sake and the Gospel, shall receive a hundred fold in this life, with persecution:" that is part of his reward: and, "He chastiseth every son that he receiveth; — if ye be exempt from sufferings, ye are bastards, and not sons." These are some of Christ's promises: will you see some of Christ's blessings that he gives his church? "Blessed are the poor: blessed are the hungry and thirsty: blessed are they that mourn: blessed are the humble: blessed are the persecuted." Of the eight beatitudes, five of them have temporal misery and meanness, or an afflicted condition, for their subject. Will you at last see some of the rewards which Christ hath propounded to his servants, to invite them to follow him? "When I am lifted up, I will draw all men after me:" when Christ is "lifted up, as Moses lift up the serpent in the wilderness," that is, lifted upon the cross, then "he will draw us after him." — "To you it is

given for Christ," saith St. Paul, when he went to sweeten and flatter the Philippians: well, what is given to them? some great favours, surely; true; "It is not only given you that you believe in Christ," though that be a great matter — "but also that you suffer for him," that is the highest of your honour. And therefore St. James, "My brethren, count it all joy when ye enter into divers temptations:" and St. Peter; "Communicating with the sufferings of Christ, rejoice." And St. James again; "We count them blessed that have suffered:" and St. Paul, when he gives his blessing to the Thessalonians, useth this form of prayer; "Our Lord direct your hearts in the charity of God, and in the patience and sufferings of Christ." So that if we will serve the King of sufferings, whose crown was of thorns, whose sceptre was a reed of scorn, whose imperial robe was a scarlet of mockery, whose throne was the cross; we must serve him in sufferings, in poverty of spirit, in humility and mortification; and for our reward we shall have persecution, and all its blessed consequents. "*Atque hoc est esse Christianum.*"[4]

Since this was done in the green tree, what might we expect should be done in the dry? Let us, in the next place, consider how God hath treated his saints and servants in the descending ages of the Gospel: that if the best of God's servants were followers of Jesus in this covenant of sufferings, we may not think it strange concerning the fiery trial, as if some new thing had happened to us. For as the Gospel was founded in sufferings, we shall also see it grow in persecutions; and as Christ's blood did cement the corner-stones, and the first foundation; so the blood and sweat, the groans and sighings, the afflictions and mortifications, of saints and martyrs, did make the superstructures, and must at last finish the building.

If we begin with the Apostles, who were to persuade the world to become Christian, and to use proper arguments of invitations, we shall find that they never offered an argument of temporal

[4] *And this is to be a Christian.*

prosperity; they never promised empires and thrones on earth, nor riches, nor temporal power: and it would have been soon confuted, if they who were whipt and imprisoned, banished and scattered, persecuted and tormented, should have promised sunshine days to others which they could not to themselves. Of all the Apostles there was not one that died a natural death but only St. John; and did he escape? Yes: but he was put into a cauldron of scalding lead and oil before the Porta Latina in Rome, and escaped death by miracle, though no miracle was wrought to make him escape the torture. And, besides this, he lived long in banishment, and that was worse than St. Peter's chains. "*Sanctus Petrus in vinculis, et Johannes ante Portam Latinam*,"[5] were both days of martyrdom, and church-festivals. And after a long and laborious life, and the affliction of being detained from his crown, and his sorrows for the death of his fellow-disciples, he died full of days and sufferings. And when St. Paul was taken into the apostolate, his commissions were signed in these words; "I will shew unto him how great things he must suffer for my name:" And his whole life was a continual suffering. "*Quotidie morior*" was his motto, "I die daily;" and his lesson that he daily learned was, to 'know Christ Jesus, and him crucified;' and all his joy was 'to rejoice in the cross of Christ;' and the changes of his life were nothing but the changes of his sufferings, and the variety of his labours. For though Christ hath finished his own sufferings for expiation of the world; yet there are ὑστερήματα θλίψεων, 'portions that are behind of the sufferings' of Christ, which must be filled up by his body, the church; and happy are they that put in the greatest symbol: for 'in the same measure you are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, in the same shall ye be also of the consolation.' And therefore, concerning St. Paul, as it was also concerning Christ, there is nothing, or but very little, in Scripture, relating to his person and chances of his private life, but his labours and persecutions; as if the Holy Ghost

[5] *Saint Peter in chains, and John before the Porta Latina.*

did think nothing fit to stand upon record for Christ but sufferings.

And now began to work the greatest glory of the divine providence; here was the case of Christianity at stake. The world was rich and prosperous, learned and full of wise men; the Gospel was preached with poverty and persecution, in simplicity of discourse, and in demonstration of the Spirit: God was on one side, and the devil on the other; they each of them dressed up their city; Babylon upon earth, Jerusalem from above. The devil's city was full of pleasure, triumphs, victories, and cruelty; good news; and great wealth; conquest over kings, and making nations tributary: they 'bound kings in chains, and the nobles with links of iron;' and the inheritance of the earth was theirs: the Romans were lords over the greatest part of the world; and God permitted to the devil the firmament and increase, the wars and the success of that people giving to him an entire power of disposing the great change of the world, so as might best increase their greatness and power; and he therefore did it, because all the power of the Roman greatness was a professed enemy to Christianity. And on the other side, God was to build up Jerusalem, and the kingdom of the Gospel; and he chose to build it of hewn stone, cut and broken; the Apostles he chose for preachers, and they had no learning; women and mean people were the first disciples, and they had no power; the devil was to lose his kingdom, he wanted no malice: and therefore he stirred up, and, as well as he could, he made active all the power of Rome, and all the learning of the Greeks, and all the malice of barbarous people, and all the prejudice and the obstinacy of the Jews, against this doctrine and institution, which preached, and promised, and brought, persecution along with it. On the one side, there was '*scandalum crucis:*'[6] on the other, '*patientia sanctorum:*'[7] and what was the event? They that had overcome the world, could not strangle Christianity. But so have I seen the

[6] *the offence of the cross.* [7] *the patience of the saints.*

sun with a little ray of distant light challenge all the power of darkness, and without violence and noise, climbing up the hill, hath made night so to retire, that its memory was lost in the joys and spritefulness of the morning: and Christianity without violence or armies, without resistance and self-preservation, without strength or human eloquence, without challenging of privileges or fighting against tyranny, without alteration of government and scandal of princes, with its humility and meekness, with toleration and patience, with obedience and charity, with praying and dying, did insensibly turn the world into Christian, and persecution into victory.

For Christ, who began, and lived, and died in sorrows, perceiving his own sufferings to succeed so well, and that 'for suffering death, he was crowned with immortality,' resolved to take all his disciples and servants to the fellowship of the same suffering, that they might have a participation of his glory; knowing, God had opened no gate of heaven but the 'narrow gate,' to which the cross was the key. And since Christ now being our high-priest in heaven, intercedes for us by representing his passion, and the dolours of the cross, that even in glory he might still preserve the mercies of his past sufferings, for which the Father did so delight in him; he also designs to present us to God dressed in the same robe, and treated in the same manner, and honoured with 'the marks of the Lord Jesus;' "He hath predestinated us to be conformable to the image of his Son." And if under a head crowned with thorns, we bring to God members circled with roses, and softness, and delicacy, triumphant members in the militant church, God will reject us, he will not know us who are so unlike our elder brother: for we are members of the Lamb, not of the lion; and of Christ's suffering part, not of the triumphant part: and for three hundred years together the church lived upon blood, and was nourished with blood; the blood of her own children. Thirty-three bishops of Rome in immediate succession were put to violent and unnatural deaths; and so were all the churches of the east and west built; the cause

of Christ and of religion was advanced by the sword, but it was the sword of the persecutors, not of resisters or warriors: they were 'all baptized into the death of Christ;' their very profession and institution is to live like him, and, when he requires it, to die for him; that is the very formality, the life and essence, of Christianity. This, I say, lasted for three hundred years, that the prayers, and the backs, and the necks of Christians fought against the rods and axes of the persecutors, and prevailed, till the country, and the cities, and the court itself, was filled with Christians. And by this time the army of martyrs was vast and numerous, and the number of sufferers blunted the hangman's sword. For Christ had triumphed over the princes and powers of the world, before he would admit them to serve him; he first felt their malice, before he would make use of their defence; to shew that it was not his necessity that required it, but his grace that admitted kings and queens to be nurses of the church.

And now the church was at ease, and she that sucked the blood of the martyrs so long, began now to suck the milk of queens. Indeed it was a great mercy in appearance, and was so intended, but it proved not so. But then the Holy Ghost, in pursuance of the design of Christ, who meant by suffering to perfect his church, as himself was by the same instrument, — was pleased, now that persecution did cease, to inspire the church with the Spirit of mortification and austerity; and then they made colleges of sufferers, persons who, to secure their inheritance in the world to come, did cut off all their portion in this, excepting so much of it as was necessary to their present being; and by instruments of humility, by patience under, and a voluntary undertaking of, the cross, the burden of the Lord, — by self-denial, by fastings and sackcloth, and pernoctations[8] in prayer, they chose then to exercise the active part of the religion, mingling it as much as they could with the suffering.

And indeed it is so glorious a thing to be like Christ, to be

[8] spending the night.

dressed like the Prince of the catholic church, who was 'a man of sufferings,' and to whom a prosperous and unafflicted person is very unlike, that in all ages the servants of God have 'put on the armour of righteousness, on the right hand and on the left:' that is, in the sufferings of persecution, or the labours of mortification; in patience under the rod of God, or by election of our own; by toleration, or self-denial; by actual martyrdom, or by aptness or disposition towards it; by dying for Christ, or suffering for him; by being willing to part with all when he calls for it, and by parting with what we can for the relief of his poor members. For, know this, there is no state in the church so serene, no days so prosperous, in which God does not give to his servants the powers and opportunities of suffering for him; not only they that die for Christ, but they that live according to his laws, shall find some lives to part with, and many ways to suffer for Christ. To kill and crucify the old man and all his lusts, to mortify a beloved sin, to fight against temptations, to do violence to our bodies, to live chastely, to suffer affronts patiently, to forgive injuries and debts, to renounce all prejudice and interest in religion, and to choose our side for truth's sake (not because it is prosperous, but because it pleases God), to be charitable beyond our power, to reprove our betters with modesty and openness, to displease men rather than God, to be at enmity with the world, that you may preserve friendship with God, to deny the importunity and troublesome kindness of a drinking friend, to own truth in despite of danger or scorn, to despise shame, to refuse worldly pleasures when they tempt your soul beyond duty or safety, to take pains in the cause of religion, the 'labour of love,' and the crossing of your anger, peevishness and morosity: these are the daily sufferings of a Christian; and, if we perform them well, will have the same reward, and an equal smart, and greater labour, than the plain suffering the hangman's sword. This I have discoursed, to represent unto you, that you cannot be exempted from the similitude of Christ's sufferings: that God will shut no age nor no man from his portion of the cross; that we cannot fail of the result of this

predestination, nor without our own fault be excluded from the covenant of sufferings. 'Judgment must begin at God's house,' and enters first upon the sons and heirs of the kingdom; and if it be not by the direct persecution of tyrants, it will be by the direct persecution of the devil, or infirmities of our own flesh. But because this was but the secondary meaning of the text, I return to make use of all the former discourse.

Let no Christian man make any judgment concerning his condition or his cause, by the external event of things. For although in the law of Moses, God made with his people a covenant of temporal prosperity, and "his saints did bind the kings of the Amorites, and the Philistines, in chains, and their nobles with links of iron," and then, that was the honour which all his saints had: yet, in Christ Jesus, he made a covenant of sufferings. Most of the graces of Christianity are suffering graces, and God hath predestinated us to sufferings, and we are baptized into suffering, and our very communions are symbols of our duty, by being the sacrament of Christ's death and passion; and Christ foretold to us tribulation, and promised only that he would be with us in tribulation, that he would give us his Spirit to assist us at tribunals, and his grace to despise the world, and to contemn riches, and boldness to confess every article of the Christian faith, in the face of armies and armed tyrants. And he also promised that 'all things should work together for the best to his servants,' that is, he would 'out of the eater bring meat, and out of the strong issue sweetness,' and crowns and sceptres should spring from crosses, and that the cross itself should stand upon the globes and sceptres of princes; but he never promised to his servants, that they should pursue kings and destroy armies, that they should reign over nations, and promote the cause of Jesus Christ, by breaking his commandment. 'The shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, the armour of righteousness, and the weapons of spiritual warfare;' these are they by which Christianity swelled from a small company, and a less reputation, to possess the chairs of doctors, and the thrones of princes, and the hearts

of all men. But men, in all ages, will be tampering with shadows and toys. The Apostles at no hand could endure to hear that Christ's 'kingdom was not of this world,' and that their Master should die a sad and shameful death; though, that way, he was to receive his crown, and 'enter into glory.' And after Christ's time, when his disciples had taken up the cross, and were marching the King's highway of sorrows, there were a very great many, even the generality of Christians, for two or three ages together, who fell a dreaming that Christ should come and reign upon earth again for a thousand years, and then the saints should reign in all abundance of temporal power and fortunes: but these men were content to stay for it till after the resurrection; in the meantime, took up their cross, and followed after their Lord, the King of sufferings. But now-a-days, we find a generation of men who have changed the covenant of sufferings into victories and triumphs, riches and prosperous chances, and reckon their Christianity by their good fortunes; as if Christ had promised to his servants no heaven hereafter, no Spirit in the meantime to refresh their sorrows; as if he had enjoined them no passive graces; but, as if to be a Christian, and to be a Turk, were the same thing. Mahomet entered and possessed by the sword: Christ came by the cross, entered by humility: and his saints 'possess their souls in patience.'

God was fain to multiply miracles to make Christ capable of being a 'man of sorrows:' and shall we think he will work miracles to make us delicate? He promised us a glorious portion hereafter, to which if all the sufferings of the world were put together, they are not worthy to be compared; and shall we, with Dives, choose our portion of 'good things in this life?' If Christ suffered so many things only that he might give us glory, shall it be strange that we shall suffer who are to receive his glory? It is in vain to think we shall obtain glories at an easier rate, than to drink of the brook in the way in which Christ was drenched. When the devil appeared to St. Martin, in a bright splendid shape, and said he was Christ; he answered, "*Christus non nisi in Cruce*

apparet suis in hac vita."[9] And when St. Ignatius was newly tied in a chain to be led to his martyrdom, he cried out, "*Nunc incipio esse Christianus.*"[10] And it was observed by Minutius Felix, and was indeed a great and excellent truth, "*Omnes viri fortes, quos Gentiles prædicabant in exemplum, ærumnis suis inclyti floruerunt;*"[11] 'the Gentiles in their whole religion never propounded any man imitable, unless the man were poor or persecuted.' Brutus stood for his country's liberty, but lost his army and his life; Socrates was put to death for speaking a religious truth; Cato chose to be on the right side, but happened to fall upon the oppressed and the injured; he died together with his party.

Victrix causa Deis placuit, sed victa Catoni.[12]

And if God thus dealt with the best of heathens, to whom he had made no clear revelation of immortal recompenses; how little is the faith, and how much less is the patience of Christians, if they shall think much to suffer sorrow, since they so clearly see with the eye of faith the great things which are laid up for them that are 'faithful unto the death?' Faith is useless, if now in the midst of so great pretended lights, we shall not dare to trust God, unless we have all in hand that we desire; and suffer nothing, for all we can hope for. They that live by sense, have no use of faith: yet, our Lord Jesus, concerning whose passions the Gospel speaks much, but little of his glorifications; whose shame was public, whose pains were notorious, but his joys and transfigurations were secret, and kept private; he who would not suffer his holy mother, whom in great degrees he exempted from sin, — to be exempted from many and great sorrows, certainly intends to admit none to his resurrection but by the doors of his grave, none to glory but by

[9] *Christ does not appear to his own in this life except on the cross.*

[10] *Now I begin to be a Christian.*

[11] *All the brave men whom the Gentiles put forward as an example were celebrated for their sufferings.*

[12] *The victorious cause pleased the gods, but the vanquished, Cato.* — LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, I. 128.

the way of the cross. "If we be planted into the likeness of his death, we shall be also of his resurrection;" else on no terms. Christ took away sin from us, but he left us our share of sufferings; and the cross, which was first printed upon us, in the waters of baptism, must for ever be born by us in penance, in mortification, in self-denial, and in martyrdom, and toleration, according as God shall require of us by the changes of the world, and the condition of the church.

For Christ considers nothing but souls, he values not their estates or bodies, supplying our want by his providence; and we are secured that our bodies may be killed, but cannot perish, so long as we preserve our duty and our consciences.

Christ, our captain, hangs naked upon the cross; our fellow-soldiers are cast into prison, torn with lions, rent in sunder with trees returning from their violent bendings, broken upon wheels, roasted upon gridirons, and have had the honour not only to have a good cause, but also to suffer for it; and by faith, not by armies, — by patience, not by fighting, have overcome the world. "*Et sit anima mea cum Christianis;*" "I pray God my soul may be among the Christians." And yet the Turks have prevailed upon a great part of the Christian world, and have made them slaves and tributaries, and do them all spite, and are hugely prosperous: but when Christians are so, then they are tempted and put in danger, and never have their duty and their interest so well secured, as when they lose all for Christ, and are adorned with wounds or poverty, change or scorn, affronts or revilings, which are obelisks and triumphs of a holy cause. Evil men and evil causes had need have good fortune and great success to support their persons and their pretences; for nothing but innocence and Christianity can flourish in a persecution. I sum up this first discourse in a word: in all the Scripture, and in all the authentic stories of the church, we find it often that the devil appeared in the shape of an 'angel of light,' but was never suffered so much as to counterfeit a persecuted sufferer. Say no more, therefore, as the murmuring Israelites said, 'If the Lord be with us, why have these evils appre-

hended us?' for if to be afflicted be a sign that God hath forsaken a man, and refuses to own his religion or his question, then he that oppresses the widow, and murders the innocent, and puts the fatherless to death, and follows Providence by doing all the evils that he can, that is, all that God suffers him, he, I say, is the only saint and servant of God: and upon the same ground, the wolf and the fox may boast, when they scatter and devour a flock of lambs and harmless sheep.

IX.

SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

(1605-1682.)

URN-BURIAL (*HYDRIOTAPHIA*).

[Written about 1658.]

Chapter IV.

Christians have handsomely glossed the deformity of death by careful consideration of the body, and civil rites which take off brutal terminations: and though they conceived all reparable by a resurrection, cast not off all care of interment. And since the ashes of sacrifices burnt upon the altar of God were carefully carried out by the priests, and deposed in a clean field; since they acknowledged their bodies to be the lodging of Christ, and temples of the Holy Ghost, they devolved not all upon the sufficiency of soul-existence; and therefore with long services and full solemnities, concluded their last exequies, wherein to all distinctions the Greek devotion seems most pathetically ceremonious.

Christian invention hath chiefly driven at rites, which speak hopes of another life, and hints of a resurrection. And if the ancient Gentiles held not the immortality of their better part, and some subsistence after death, in several rites, customs, actions, and expressions, they contradicted their own opinions: wherein Democritus went high, even to the thought of a resurrection, as scoffingly recorded by Pliny. What can be more express than the expression of Phocylides? Or who would expect from Lucretius a sentence of Ecclesiastes? Before Plato could speak, the soul had wings in Homer, which fell not, but flew out of the body into the mansions of the dead; who also observed that handsome dis-

tinction of Demas[1] and Soma,[2] for the body conjoined to the soul, and body separated from it. Lucian spoke much truth in jest, when he said that part of Hercules which proceeded from Alcmena perished, that from Jupiter remained immortal. Thus Socrates was content that his friends should bury his body, so they would not think they buried Socrates; and, regarding only his immortal part, was indifferent to be burnt or buried. From such considerations, Diogenes might contemn sepulture, and, being satisfied that the soul could not perish, grow careless of corporal interment. The Stoicks, who thought the souls of wise men had their habitation about the moon, might make slight account of subterraneous deposition; whereas the Pythagoreans and transcorporating philosophers,[3] who were to be often buried, held great care of their interment. And the Platonicks rejected not a due care of the grave, though they put their ashes to unreasonable expectations, in their tedious term of return and long set revolution.

Men have lost their reason in nothing so much as their religion, wherein stones and clouts make martyrs; and since the religion of one seems madness unto another, to afford an account or rational of old rites requires no rigid reader. That they kindled the pyre aversely, or turning their face from it, was an handsome symbol of unwilling ministration. That they washed their bones with wine and milk; that the mother wrapped them in linen, and dried them in her bosom, the first fostering part and place of their nourishment; that they opened their eyes towards heaven before they kindled the fire, as the place of their hopes or original, were no improper ceremonies. Their last valediction, thrice uttered by the attendants, was also very solemn, and somewhat answered by Christians, who thought it too little, if they threw not the earth thrice upon the interred body. That, in strewing their tombs, the Romans affected the rose; the Greeks, amaranthus and myrtle: that the funeral pyre consisted of sweet fuel, cypress, fir, larix,[4] yew,

[1] living body. [2] corpse.
[3] Those who held the doctrine of the transmigration of souls.
[4] larch.

and trees perpetually verdant, lay silent expressions of their surviving hopes. Wherein Christians, who deck their coffins with bays, have found a more elegant emblem, for that it, seeming dead, will restore itself from the root, and its dry and exsuccous[5] leaves resume their verdure again; which, if we mistake not, we have also observed in furze. Whether the planting of yew in churchyards hold not its original from ancient funeral rites, or as an emblem of resurrection, from its perpetual verdure, may also admit conjecture.

They made use of music to excite or quiet the affections of their friends, according to different harmonies. But the secret and symbolical hint was the harmonical nature of the soul; which, delivered from the body, went again to enjoy the primitive harmony of heaven, from whence it first descended; which, according to its progress traced by antiquity, came down by Cancer, and ascended by Capricornus.

They burnt not children before their teeth appeared, as apprehending their bodies too tender a morsel for fire, and that their gristly bones would scarce leave separable relics after the pyral combustion. That they kindled not fire in their houses for some days after was a strict memorial of the late afflicting fire. And mourning without hope, they had an happy fraud against excessive lamentation, by a common opinion that deep sorrows disturb their ghosts.

That they buried their dead on their backs, or in a supine position, seems agreeable unto profound sleep, and common posture of dying, contrary to the most natural way of birth; nor unlike our pendulous posture, in the doubtful state of the womb. Diogenes was singular, who preferred a prone situation in the grave; and some Christians like neither, who decline the figure of rest, and make choice of an erect posture.

That they carried them out of the world with their feet forward,[6] not inconsonant unto reason, as contrary unto the native posture

[5] sapless. [6] [was.]

of man, and his production first into it; and also agreeable unto their opinions, while they bid adieu unto the world, not to look again upon it; whereas Mahometans who think to return to a delightful life again, are carried forth with their heads forward, and looking toward their houses.

They closed their eyes, as parts which first die, or first discover the sad effects of death. But their iterated clamations to excitate their dying or dead friends, or revoke them unto life again, was a vanity of affection, as not presumably ignorant of the critical tests of death, by apposition of feathers, glasses, and reflection of figures, which dead eyes represent not: which, however not strictly verifiable in fresh and warm *cadavers*, could hardly elude the test in corpses of four or five days.

That they sucked in the last breath of their expiring friends, was surely a practice of no medical institution, but a loose opinion that the soul passed out that way, and a fondness of affection, from some Pythagorical foundation that the spirit of one body passed into another, which they wished might be their own.

That they poured oil upon the pyre, was a tolerable practice, while the intention rested in facilitating the accension. But to place good omens in the quick and speedy burning, to sacrifice unto the winds for a dispatch in this office, was a low form of superstition.

The archimime, or jester, attending the funeral train, and imitating the speeches, gestures, and manners of the deceased, was too light for such solemnities, contradicting their funeral orations and doleful rites of the grave.

That they buried a piece of money with them as a fee of the Elysian ferryman, was a practice full of folly. But the ancient custom of placing coins in considerable urns, and the present practice of burying medals in the noble foundations of Europe, are laudable ways of historical discoveries, in actions, persons, chronologies; and posterity will applaud them.

We examine not the old laws of sepulture, exempting certain persons from burial or burning. But hereby we apprehend that

these were not the bones of persons planet-struck or burnt with fire from heaven; no relicks of traitors to their country, self-killers, or sacrilegious malefactors; persons in old apprehension unworthy of the earth; condemned unto the Tartarus of hell, and bottomless pit of Pluto, from whence there was no redemption.

Nor were only many customs questionable in order to their obsequies, but also sundry practices, fictions, and conceptions, discordant or obscure, of their state and future beings. Whether unto eight or ten bodies of men to add one of a woman, as being more inflammable and unctuously constituted for the better pyral combustion, were any rational practice; or whether the complaint of Periander's wife be tolerable, that wanting her funeral burning, she suffered intolerable cold in hell, according to the constitution of the infernal house of Pluto, wherein cold makes a great part of their tortures; it cannot pass without some question.

Why the female ghosts appear unto Ulysses, before the heroes and masculine spirits, — why the Psyche or soul of Tiresias[7] is of the masculine gender, who, being blind on earth, sees more than all the rest in hell; why the funeral suppers consisted of eggs, beans, smallage, and lettuce, since the dead are made to eat asphodels about the Elysian meadows, — why, since there is no sacrifice acceptable, nor any propitiation for the covenant of the grave, men set up the deity of Morta, and fruitlessly adored divinities without ears, it cannot escape some doubt.

The dead seem all alive in the human Hades of Homer, yet cannot well speak, prophesy, or know the living, except they drink blood, wherein is the life of man. And therefore the souls of Penelope's paramours, conducted by Mercury, chirped like bats, and those which followed Hercules, made a noise but like a flock of birds.

The departed spirits know things past and to come; yet are ignorant of things present. Agamemnon foretells what should happen unto Ulysses, yet ignorantly inquires what is become of

[7] Homer, *Odyssey*, XI. 90, 91.

his own son. The ghosts are afraid of swords in Homer; yet Sibylla tells Æneas in Virgil, the thin habit of spirits was beyond the force of weapons. The spirits put off their malice with their bodies, and Cæsar and Pompey accord in Latin hell: yet Ajax, in Homer, endures not a conference with Ulysses: and Deiphobus appears all mangled in Virgil's ghosts, yet we meet with perfect shadows among the wounded ghosts of Homer.

Since Charon in Lucian applauds his condition among the dead, whether it be handsomely said of Achilles, that living contemner of death, that he had rather be a ploughman's servant than emperor of the dead? How Hercules his soul is in hell, and yet in heaven; and Julius his soul in a star, yet seen by Æneas in hell? — except the ghosts were but images and shadows of the soul, received in higher mansions, according to the ancient division of body, soul, and image, or *simulachrum*, of them both. The particulars of future beings must needs be dark unto ancient theories, which Christian philosophy yet determines but in a cloud of opinions. A dialogue between two infants in the womb concerning the state of this world,[8] might handsomely illustrate our ignorance of the next, whereof methinks we yet discourse in Plato's den, and are but embryo philosophers.

Pythagoras escapes in the fabulous hell of Dante, among that swarm of philosophers, wherein, whilst we meet with Plato and Socrates, Cato is to be found in no lower place than purgatory. Among all the set, Epicurus is most considerable, whom men make honest without an Elysium, who contemned life without encouragement of immortality, and making nothing after death, yet made nothing of the king of terrors.

Were the happiness of the next world as closely apprehended as the felicities of this, it were a martyrdom to live; and unto such as consider none hereafter, it must be more than death to die, which makes us amazed at those audacities that durst be

[8] WILKIN states that Sir Thomas Browne "actually did write such a dialogue," but he had searched in vain for it.

nothing and return into their chaos again. Certainly such spirits as could contemn death, when they expected no better being after, would have scorned to live, had they known any. And therefore we applaud not the judgment of Machiavel, that Christianity makes men cowards, or that with the confidence of but half-dying, the despised virtues of patience and humility have abased the spirits of men, which Pagan principles exalted; but rather regulated the wildness of audacities, in the attempts, grounds, and eternal sequels of death; wherein men of the boldest spirits are often prodigiously temerarious.[9] Nor can we extenuate the valor of ancient martrys, who contemned death in the uncomfortable scene of their lives, and in their decrepit martyrdoms did probably lose not many months of their days, or parted with life when it was scarce worth the living. For (beside that long time past holds no consideration unto a slender time to come) they had no small disadvantage from the constitution of old age, which naturally makes men fearful, and complexionally superannuated from the bold and courageous thoughts of youth and fervent years. But the contempt of death from corporal animosity[10] promoteth not our felicity. They may sit in the orchestra, and noblest seats of heaven, who have held up shaking hands in the fire, and humanly contended for glory.

Meanwhile Epicurus lies deep in Dante's hell, wherein we meet with tombs enclosing souls which denied their immortalities. But whether the virtuous heathen, who lived better than he spake, or erring in the principles of himself, yet lived above philosophers of more specious maxims, lie so deep as he is placed, at least so low as not to rise against Christians, who believing or knowing that truth, have lastingly denied it in their practice and conversation — were a query too sad to insist on.

But all or most apprehensions rested in opinions of some future being, which, ignorantly or coldly believed, begat those perverted conceptions, ceremonies, sayings, which Christians pity or laugh

[9] rash. [10] physical courage.

at. Happy are they which live not in that disadvantage of time, when men could say little for futurity, but from reason: whereby the noblest minds fell often upon doubtful deaths, and melancholy dissolutions. With these hopes, Socrates warmed his doubtful spirits against that cold potion; and Cato, before he durst give the fatal stroke, spent part of the night in reading the Immortality of Plato, thereby confirming his wavering hand unto the animosity of that attempt.

It is the heaviest stone that melancholy can throw at a man, to tell him he is at the end of his nature; or that there is no further state to come, unto which this seems progressional, and otherwise made in vain. Without this accomplishment, the natural expectation and desire of such a state, were but a fallacy in nature; unsatisfied considerators would quarrel the justice of their constitutions, and rest content that Adam had fallen lower; whereby, by knowing no other original, and deeper ignorance of themselves, they might have enjoyed the happiness of inferior creatures, who in tranquillity possess their constitutions, as having not the apprehension to deplore their own natures, and, being framed below the circumference of these hopes, or cognition of better being, the wisdom of God hath necessitated their contentment: but the superior ingredient and obscured part of ourselves, whereto all present felicities afford no resting contentment, will be able at last to tell us, we are more than our present selves, and evacuate[11] such hopes in the fruition of their own accomplishments.

Chapter V.

Now since these dead bones have already out-lasted the living ones of Methuselah, and in a yard under ground, and thin walls of clay, out-worn all the strong and specious buildings above it; and quietly rested under the drums and trampling of three

[11] make void.

conquests: what prince can promise such diuturnity[12] unto his relics, or might not gladly say,

Sic ego componi versus in ossa velim?[13]

Time, which antiquates antiquities, and hath an art to make dust of all things, hath yet spared these minor monuments.

In vain we hope to be known by open and visible conservatories, when to be unknown was the means of their continuation, and obscurity their protection. If they died by violent hands, and were thrust into their urns, these bones become considerable, and some old philosophers would honor them, whose souls they conceived most pure, which were thus snatched from their bodies, and to retain a stronger propension unto them; whereas they weariedly left a languishing corpse, and with faint desires of reunion. If they fell by long and aged decay, yet wrapt up in the bundle of time, they fall into indistinction, and make but one blot with infants. If we begin to die when we live, and long life be but a prolongation of death, our life is a sad composition; we live with death, and die not in a moment. How many pulses made up the life of Methuselah, were work for Archimedes: common counters sum up the life of Moses his man. Our days become considerable, like petty sums, by minute accumulations; where numerous fractions make up but small round numbers; and our days of a span long, make not one little finger.

If the nearness of our last necessity brought a nearer conformity into it, there were a happiness in hoary hairs, and no calamity in half-senses. But the long habit of living indisposeth us for dying; when avarice makes us the sport of death, when even David grew politickly cruel, and Solomon could hardly be said to be the wisest of men. But many are too early old, and before the date of age. Adversity stretcheth our days, misery makes Alcmena's

[12] long existence.

[13] *Thus I should wish verses to be composed on my bones.*—TIBULLUS, III. 2, 26

nights,[14] and time hath no wings unto it. But the most tedious being is that which can unwish itself, content to be nothing, or never to have been, which was beyond the malcontent of Job, who cursed not the day of his life, but his nativity; content to have so far been, as to have a title to future being, although he had lived here but in an hidden state of life, and as it were an abortion.

What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, though puzzling questions,[15] are not beyond all conjecture. What time the persons of these ossuaries entered the famous nations of the dead, and slept with princes and counsellors, might admit a wide solution. But who were the proprietaries of these bones, or what bodies these ashes made up, were a question above antiquarism; not to be resolved by man, nor easily perhaps by spirits, except we consult the provincial guardians, or tutelary observators. Had they made as good provision for their names, as they have done for their relics, they had not so grossly erred in the art of perpetuation. But to subsist in bones, and be but pyramidally extant, is a fallacy in duration. Vain ashes which in the oblivion of names, persons, times, and sexes, have found unto themselves a fruitless continuation, and only rise unto late posterity, as emblems of mortal vanities, antidotes against pride, vain-glory, and madding vices. Pagan vain-glories which thought the world might last forever, had encouragement for ambition; and, finding no *atropos*[16] unto the immortality of their names, were never dampt with the necessity of oblivion. Even old ambitions had the advantage of ours, in the attempts of their vain-glories, who acting early, and before the probable meridian of time, have by this time found great accomplishment of their designs, whereby the ancient heroes have already out-lasted their monuments, and mechanical preservations.

[14] "One night as long as three." — WILKIN.

[15] "The puzzling questions of Tiberius unto grammarians. *Marcel. Donatus in Suet.*" — WILKIN.

[16] One of the Fates, whose office was to cut the thread of life.

But in this latter scene of time, we cannot expect such mummies unto our memories, when ambition may fear the prophecy of Elias, and Charles the Fifth can never hope to live within two Methuselahs of Hector.

And therefore, restless inquietude for the diuturnity of our memories unto present considerations seems a vanity almost out of date, and superannuated piece of folly. We cannot hope to live so long in our names, as some have done in their persons. One face of Janus holds no proportion unto the other. 'Tis too late to be ambitious. The great mutations of the world are acted, or time may be too short for our designs. To extend our memories by monuments, whose death we daily pray for, and whose duration we cannot hope, without injury to our expectations in the advent of the last day, were a contradiction to our beliefs. We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time, are providentially taken off from such imaginations; and, being necessitated to eye the remaining particle of futurity are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which maketh pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment.

Circles and right lines limit and close all bodies, and the mortal right-lined circle,[17] must conclude and shut up all. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporally considereth all things: our fathers find their graves in our short memories, and sadly tell us how we may be buried in our survivors. Grave-stones tell truth scarce forty years. Generations pass while some trees stand, and old families last not three oaks. To be read by bare inscriptions like many in Gruter,[18] to hope for eternity by enigmatical epithets or first letters of our names, to be studied by antiquaries, who we were, and have new names given us like many of the mummies, are cold consolations unto the students of perpetuity, even by everlasting languages.

[17] "The character of death." — WILKIN.

[18] Gruter's "Ancient Inscriptions."

To be content that times to come should only know there was such a man, not caring whether they knew more of him, was a frigid ambition in Cardan; disparaging his horoscopal inclination and judgment of himself. Who cares to subsist like Hippocrates's patients, or Achilles's horses in Homer, under naked nominations, without deserts and noble acts, which are the balsam of our memories, the *entelechia*[19] and soul of our subsistences? To be nameless in worthy deeds, exceeds an infamous history. The Canaanitish woman lives more happily without a name, than Herodias with one. And who had not rather have been the good thief than Pilate?

But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals with the memory of men without distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founder of the pyramids? Herostratus lives that burnt the temple of Diana, he is almost lost that built it. Time hath spared the epitaph of Adrian's horse, confounded that of himself. In vain we compute our felicities by the advantage of our good names, since bad have equal durations, and Thersites is like to live as long as Agamemnon. Who knows whether the best of men be known, or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot, than any that stand remembered in the known account of time? Without the favor of the everlasting register, the first man had been as unknown as the last, and Methuselah's long life had been his only chronicle.

Oblivion is not to be hired. The greater part must be content to be as though they had not been, to be found in the register of God, not in the record of man. Twenty-seven names make up the first story before the flood, and the recorded names ever since contain not one living century. The number of the dead long exceedeth all that shall live. The night of time far surpasseth the day, and who knows when was the equinox? Every hour adds unto that current arithmetick, which scarce stands one

[19] A word used by Aristotle of the soul as the *entelechia* of the body, that by which the body actually exists.

moment. And since death must be the *Lucina* of life, and even Pagans could doubt, whether thus to live were to die; since our longest sun sets at right descensions, and makes but winter arches, and therefore it cannot be long before we lie down in darkness, and have our light in ashes; since the brother of death[20] daily haunts us with dying mementos, and time that grows old in itself, bids us hope no long duration; — diuturnity is a dream and folly of expectation.

Darkness and light divide the course of time, and oblivion shares with memory a great part even of our living beings; we slightly remember our felicities, and the smartest strokes of affliction leave but short smart upon us. Sense endureth no extremities, and sorrows destroy us or themselves. To weep into stones are fables. Afflictions induce callosities; miseries are slippery, or fall like snow upon us, which notwithstanding is no unhappy stupidity. To be ignorant of evils to come, and forgetful of evils past, is a merciful provision in nature, whereby we digest the mixture of our few and evil days, and our delivered senses not relapsing into cutting remembrances, our sorrows are not kept raw by the edge of repetitions. A great part of antiquity contented their hopes of subsistency with a transmigration of their souls, — a good way to continue their memories, while having the advantage of plural successions, they could not but act something remarkable in such variety of beings, and enjoying the fame of their passed selves, make accumulation of glory unto their last durations. Others, rather than be lost in the uncomfortable night of nothing, were content to recede into the common being, and make one particle of the public soul of all things, which was no more than to return into their unknown and divine original again. Egyptian ingenuity was more unsatisfied, contriving their bodies in sweet consistencies, to attend the return of their souls.

[20] Sleep, often so called in Elizabethan poetry. *Cf.* DANIEL'S Sonnet, LI.: —

> "Care-charmer Sleep, son of the sable Night,
> Brother to Death, in silent darkness born."

But all was vanity, feeding the mind, and folly. The Egyptian mummies, which Cambyses or time hath spared, avarice now consumeth. Mummy is become merchandise, Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams.

In vain do individuals hope for immortality, or any patent from oblivion, in preservations below the moon; men have been deceived even in their flatteries, above the sun, and studied conceits to perpetuate their names in heaven. The various cosmography of that part hath already varied the names of contrived constellations; Nimrod is lost in Orion, and Osyris in the Dog-star. While we look for incorruption in the heavens, we find they are but like the earth; — durable in their main bodies, alterable in their parts, whereof, beside comets and new stars, perspectives begin to tell tales, and the spots that wander about the sun, with Phaeton's favor, would make clear conviction.

There is nothing strictly immortal, but immortality. Whatever hath no beginning, may be confident of no end; — which is the peculiar of that necessary essence that cannot destroy itself; — and the highest strain of omnipotency, to be so powerfully constituted as not to suffer even from the power of itself: all others have a dependent being and within the reach of destruction. But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God who can only destroy our souls, and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. Wherein there is so much of chance that the boldest expectants have found unhappy frustrations; and to hold long subsistence, seems but a scape in oblivion. But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes, and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

Life is a pure flame, and we live by an invisible sun within us. A small fire sufficeth for life, great flames seemed too little after death, while men vainly affected precious pyres, and to burn like Sardanapalus; but the wisdom of funeral laws found the folly

of prodigal blazes, and reduced undoing fires unto the rule of sober obsequies, wherein few could be so mean as not to provide wood, pitch, a mourner, and an urn.

Five languages secured not the epitaph of Gordianus.[21] The man of God lives longer without a tomb than any by one, invisibly interred by angels, and adjudged to obscurity, though not without some marks directing human discovery. Enoch and Elias, without either tomb or burial, in an anomalous state of being, are the great examples of perpetuity, in their long and living memory, in strict account being still on this side death, and having a late part yet to act upon this stage of earth. If in the decretory term of the world we shall not all die but be changed, according to received translation, the last day will make but few graves; at least quick resurrections will anticipate lasting sepultures. Some graves will be opened before they be quite closed, and Lazarus be no wonder. When many that feared to die, shall groan that they can die but once, the dismal state is the second and living death, when life puts despair on the damned; when men shall wish the coverings of mountains, not of monuments, and annihilations shall be courted.

While some have studied monuments, others have studiously declined them, and some have been so vainly boisterous, that they durst not acknowledge their graves; wherein Alaricus seems most subtle, who had a river turned to hide his bones at the bottom. Even Sylla, that thought himself safe in his urn, could not prevent revenging tongues, and stones thrown at his monument. Happy are they whom privacy makes innocent, who deal so with men in this world, that they are not afraid to meet them in the next; who, when they die, make no commotion among the dead, and are not touched with that poetical taint of Isaiah.[22]

Pyramids, arches, obelisks, were but the irregularities of vainglory, and wild enormities of ancient magnanimity. But the most

[21] "In Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Egyptian, Arabic: defaced by Licinius the emperor." — WILKIN.

[22] Isaiah xiv. 16.

magnanimous resolution rests in the Christian religion, which trampleth upon pride, and sits on the neck of ambition, humbly pursuing that infallible perpetuity, unto which all others must diminish their diameters, and be poorly seen in angles of contingency.[23]

Pious spirits who passed their days in raptures of futurity, made little more of this world, than the world that was before it, while they lay obscure in the chaos of pre-ordination, and night of their fore-beings. And if any have been so happy as truly to understand Christian annihilation, ecstasies, exolution,[24] liquefaction, transformation, the kiss of the spouse, gustation[25] of God, and ingression into the divine shadow, they have already had an handsome anticipation of heaven; the glory of the world is surely over, and the earth in ashes unto them.

To subsist in lasting monuments, to live in their productions, to exist in their names and predicament of chimeras, was large satisfaction unto old expectations, and made one part of their Elysiums. But all this is nothing in the metaphysicks of true belief. To live indeed, is to be again ourselves, which being not only an hope, but an evidence in noble believers, 'tis all one to lie in St. Innocent's churchyard, as in the sands of Egypt. Ready to be anything, in the ecstasy of being ever, and as content with six foot as the *moles* of Adrianus.[26]

tabesne cadavera solvat
An rogus, haud refert.[27]

[23] the least of angles. [24] dissolution. [25] tasting, or enjoyment.

[26] The Mausoleum of Hadrian at Rome, the modern Castle of St. Angelo.

[27] *Whether corruption or the funeral pyre destroys corpses, makes no difference.* — LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, VII. 809–10.

X.

ABRAHAM COWLEY.

(1618–1667.)

1. *A DISCOURSE, BY WAY OF VISION, CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT OF OLIVER CROMWELL.*[1]

[Written about 1660.]

It was the funeral day of the late man who made himself to be called protector. And though I bore but little affection, either to the memory of him, or to the trouble and folly of all public pageantry, yet I was forced by the importunity of my company to go along with them, and be a spectator of that solemnity, the expectation of which had been so great that it was said to have brought some very curious persons (and no doubt singular virtuosos) as far as from the Mount in Cornwall, and from the Orcades. I found there had been much more cost bestowed than either the dead man, or indeed death itself, could deserve. There was a mighty train of black assistants, among which, too, divers princes in the persons of their ambassadors (being infinitely afflicted for the loss of their brother) were pleased to attend; the hearse was magnificent, the idol crowned, and (not to mention all other ceremonies which are practised at royal interments, and therefore by no means could be omitted here) the vast multitude of spectators made up, as it uses to do, no small part of the spectacle itself. But yet, I know not how, the whole was so managed, that, methought, it somewhat represented the life of him for whom it was made; much noise, much tumult, much expense, much magnificence, much vain-glory; briefly, a great show, and yet, after all this, but an ill sight. At last (for it seemed long to me, and, like

[1] Hurd calls this "the best of our author's prose works."

his short reign too, very tedious) the whole scene passed by; and I retired back to my chamber, weary, and I think more melancholy than any of the mourners; where I began to reflect on the whole life of this prodigious man: and sometimes I was filled with horror and detestation of his actions, and sometimes I inclined a little to reverence and admiration of his courage, conduct, and success; till, by these different motions and agitations of mind, rocked, as it were asleep, I fell at last into this vision; or if you please to call it but a dream, I shall not take it ill, because the father of poets tells us, even dreams, too, are from God.

But sure it was no dream; for I was suddenly transported afar off (whether in the body, or out of the body, like St. Paul, I know not) and found myself on the top of that famous hill in the island Mona, which has the prospect of three great, and not-long-since most happy, kingdoms. As soon as ever I looked on them, the *not-long-since* struck upon my memory, and called forth the sad representation of all the sins, and all the miseries, that had overwhelmed them these twenty years. And I wept bitterly for two or three hours; and, when my present stock of moisture was all wasted, I fell a sighing for an hour or more; and, as soon as I recovered from my passion the use of speech and reason, I broke forth, as I remember (looking upon England) into this complaint:[2]

* * * * * *

I think I should have gone on, but that I was interrupted by a strange and terrible apparition; for there appeared to me (arising out of the earth as I conceived) the figure of a man, taller than a giant, or indeed than the shadow of any giant in the evening. His body was naked; but that nakedness adorned, or rather deformed all over, with several figures, after the manner of the antient Britons, painted upon it: and I perceived that most of them were the representation of the late battles in our civil wars, and (if I be not much mistaken) it was the battle of Naseby that was drawn upon his breast. His eyes were like burning brass;

[2] Here follow eight stanzas of poetry.

and there were three crowns of the same metal (as I guessed) and that looked as red-hot too, upon his head. He held in his right hand a sword, that was yet bloody, and nevertheless the motto of it was, *Pax quæritur bello*;[3] and in his left hand a thick book, upon the back of which was written in letters of gold, Acts, Ordinances, Protestations, Covenants, Engagements, Declarations, Remonstrances, &c.

Though this sudden, unusual, and dreadful object might have quelled a greater courage than mine, yet so it pleased God (for there is nothing bolder than a man in a vision) that I was not at all daunted, but asked him resolutely and briefly, "What art thou?" And he said, "I am called the north-west principality, his highness, the protector of the common-wealth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the dominions belonging thereunto; for I am that angel, to whom the Almighty has committed the government of those three kingdoms, which thou seest from this place." And I answered and said, "If it be so, Sir, it seems to me that for almost these twenty years past, your highness has been absent from your charge: for not only if any angel, but if any wise and honest man had since that time been our governor, we should not have wandered thus long in these laborious and endless labyrinths of confusion, but either not have entered at all into them, or at least have returned back ere we had absolutely lost our way; but, instead of your highness, we have had since such a protector, as was his predecessor Richard the third to the king his nephew; for he presently slew the commonwealth, which he pretended to protect, and set up himself in the place of it; a little less guilty indeed in one respect, because the other slew an innocent, and this man did but murder a murderer. Such a protector we have had, as we would have been glad to have changed for an enemy, and rather received a constant Turk, than this every month's apostate; such a protector, as man is to his flocks, which he sheers, and sells, or devours himself, and I would fain know what the wolf, which he

[3] *Peace is sought through war.*

protects him from, could do more. Such a protector —" and as I was proceeding, me-thoughts,[4] his highness began to put on a displeased and threatening countenance, as men use to do when their dearest friends happen to be traduced in their company; which gave me the first rise of jealousy against him, for I did not believe that Cromwell among all his foreign correspondences had ever held any with angels. However I was not hardened enough yet to venture a quarrel with him then; and therefore (as if I had spoken to the protector himself in Whitehall) I desired him "that his highness would please to pardon me, if I had unwittingly spoken anything to the disparagement of a person, whose relations to his highness I had not the honour to know."

At which he told me "that he had no other concernment for his late highness, than as he took him to be the greatest man that ever was of the English nation, if not (said he) of the whole world; which gives me a just title to the defence of his reputation, since I now account myself, as it were, a naturalized English angel, by having had so long the management of the affairs of that country. And pray, countryman, (said he, very kindly and very flatteringly) for I would not have you fall into the general error of the world, that detests and decries so extraordinary a virtue, What can be more extraordinary than that a person of mean birth, no fortune, no eminent qualities of body, which have sometimes, or of mind, which have often raised men to the highest dignities, should have the courage to attempt, and the happiness to succeed in, so improbable a design as the destruction of one of the most antient, and most solidly founded monarchies upon the earth? that he should have the power or boldness to put his prince and master to an open and infamous death; to banish that numerous and strongly-allied family; to do all this under the name and wages of a parliament; to trample upon them too as he pleased, and spurn them out of doors, when he grew weary of them; to raise up a new and unheard of monster out of their

[4] So HURD's text, but the form is incorrect.

ashes; to stifle that in the very infancy, and set up himself above all things that ever were called sovereign in England; to oppress all his enemies by arms, and all his friends afterwards by artifice; to serve all parties patiently for awhile, and to command them victoriously at last; to over-run each corner of the three nations, and overcome with equal facility both the riches of the south and the poverty of the north; to be feared and courted by all foreign princes, and adopted a brother to the gods of the earth; to call together parliaments with a word of his pen, and scatter them again with the breath of his mouth; to be humbly and daily petitioned that he would please to be hired, at the rate of two millions a year, to be the master of those who had hired him before to be their servant; to have the estates and lives of three kingdoms as much at his disposal as was the little inheritance of his father, and to be as noble and liberal in the spending of them; and lastly (for there is no end of all particulars of his glory) to bequeath all this with one word to his posterity; to die with peace at home, and triumph abroad; to be buried among kings, and with more than regal solemnity; and to leave a name behind him, not to be extinguished, but with the whole world; which, as it is now too little for his praises, so might have been too for his conquests, if the short line of his human life could have been stretched out to the extent of his immortal designs?"

By this speech, I began to understand perfectly well what kind of angel his pretended highness was; and having fortified myself privately with a short mental prayer, and with the sign of the cross (not out of any superstition to the sign, but as a recognition of my baptism in Christ), I grew a little bolder, and replied in this manner: "I should not venture to oppose what you are pleased to say in commendation of the late great, and (I confess) extraordinary person, but that I remember Christ forbids us to assent to any other doctrine but what himself has taught us, even though it should be delivered by an angel; and if such you be, Sir, it may be you have spoken all this rather to try than to tempt my frailty: for sure I am, that we must renounce or forget all the

laws of the New and Old Testament, and those which are the foundation of both, even the laws of moral and natural honesty, if we approve of the action of that man whom I suppose you commend by Irony.

There would be no end to instance in the particulars of all his wickedness; but to sum up a part of it briefly: What can be more extraordinarily wicked than for a person, such as yourself qualify him rightly, to endeavour not only to exalt himself above, but to trample upon, all his equals and betters? to pretend freedom for all men, and under the help of that pretense to make all men his servants? to take arms against taxes of scarce two hundred thousand pounds a year, and to raise them himself to above two millions? to quarrel for the loss of three or four ears, and to strike off three or four hundred heads? to fight against an imaginary suspicion of I know not what? two thousand guards to be fetched for the king, I know not from whence, and to keep up for himself no less than forty thousand? to pretend the defence of parliaments, and violently to dissolve all even of his own calling, and almost choosing? to undertake the reformation of religion, to rob it even to the very skin, and then to expose it naked to the rage of all sects and heresies? to set up counsels of rapine, and courts of murder? to fight against the king under a commission for him; to take him forcibly out of the hands of those for whom he had conquered him; to draw him into his net with protestations and vows of fidelity; and when he had caught him in it, to butcher him with as little shame as conscience or humanity, in the open face of the whole world? to receive a commission for the king and parliament, to murder (as I said) the one, and destroy no less impudently the other? to fight against monarchy when he declared for it, and declare against it when he contrived for it in his own person? to abase perfidiously and supplant ingratefully his own general[5] first, and afterwards most of those officers, who, with the loss of their honour and hazard of their souls, had lifted him

[5] Fairfax.

up to the top of his unreasonable ambitions? to break his faith with all enemies and with all friends equally? and to make no less frequent use of the most solemn perjuries, than the looser sort of people do of customary oaths? to usurp three kingdoms without any shadow of the least pretensions, and to govern them as unjustly as he got them? to set himself up as an idol (which we know, as St. Paul says, *in itself is nothing*), and make the very streets of London like the valley of Hinnon, by burning the bowels of men as a sacrifice to his molochship? to seek to entail this usurpation upon his posterity, and with it an endless war upon the nation? and lastly, by the severest judgment of Almighty God, to die hardened, and mad, and unrepentant, with the curses of the present age, and the detestation of all to succeed?"

Though I had much more to say (for the life of man is so short, that it allows not time enough to speak against a tyrant); yet, because I had a mind to hear how my strange adversary would behave himself upon this subject, and to give even the devil (as they say) his right and fair play in a disputation, I stopped here, and expected, not without the frailty of a little fear, that he should have broke into a violent passion in behalf of his favourite: but he on the contrary very calmly, and with the dove-like innocency of a serpent that was not yet warmed enough to sting, thus replied to me:

"It is not so much out of my affection to that person whom we discourse of (whose greatness is too solid to be shaken by the breath of an oratory), as for your own sake (honest countryman), whom I conceive to err rather by mistake than out of malice, that I shall endeavour to reform your uncharitable and unjust opinion. And, in the first place, I must needs put you in mind of a sentence of the most antient of the heathen divines, that you men are acquainted withal,

Οὐχ ὅσιαν [ὁσίη] κταμένοισιν ἐπ' ἀνδράσιν εὐχετάασθαι,[6]

'Tis wicked with insulting feet to tread
Upon the monuments of the dead.

[6] HOMER, *Odyssey*, XXII. 412.

And the intention of the reproof there is no less proper for this subject; for it was spoken to a person who was proud and insolent against those dead men, to whom he had been humble and obedient whilst they lived."

"Your highness may please (said I) to add the verse that follows, as no less proper for this subject:

> Whom God's just doom and their own sins have sent
> Already to their punishment.

But I take this to be the rule in the case, that, when we fix any infamy upon deceased persons, it should not be done out of hatred to the dead, but out of love and charity to the living: that the curses, which only remain in men's thoughts, and dare not come forth against tyrants (because they are tyrants) whilst they are so, may at least be for ever settled and engraven upon their memories, to deter all others from the like wickedness; which else, in the time of their foolish prosperity, the flattery of their own hearts, and of other men's tongues, would not suffer them to perceive. Ambition is so subtile a tempter, and the corruption of human nature so susceptible of the temptation, that a man can hardly resist it, be he never so much forewarned of the evil consequences; much less if he find not only the concurrence of the present, but the approbation too of following ages, which have the liberty to judge more freely. The mischief of tyranny is too great, even in the shortest time that it can continue; it is endless and insupportable, if the example be to reign too; and if a Lambert must be invited to follow the steps of a Cromwell, as well by the voice of honour, as by the sight of power and riches. Though it may seem to some fantastically, yet was it wisely done of the Syracusans, to implead with the forms of their ordinary justice, to condemn and destroy even the statues of all their tyrants: if it were possible to cut them out of all history, and to extinguish their very names, I am of opinion that it ought to be done; but, since they have left behind them too deep wounds to be ever closed up without a scar, at least let us set such a mark upon their memory that men of

the same wicked inclinations may be no less affrighted with their lasting ignominy than enticed by their momentary glories. And that your highness may perceive that I speak not all this out of any private animosity against the person of the late protector, I assure you, upon my faith, that I bear no more hatred to his name than I do to that of Marius or Sylla, who never did me, or any friend of mine, the least injury;" and with that, transported by a holy fury, I fell into this sudden rapture:[7]

* * * * * *

Here, the spirit of verse beginning a little to fail, I stopt: and his highness, smiling, said, "I was glad to see you engaged in the enclosure of metre; for, if you had staid in the open plain of disclaiming against the word tyrant, I must have had patience for half a dozen hours, till you had tired yourself as well as me. But pray, countryman, to avoid this sciomachy,[8] or imaginary combat with words, let me know, Sir, what you mean by the name of tyrant, for I remember that, among your ancient authors, not only all kings, but even Jupiter himself (your *juvans pater*[9]) is so termed; and perhaps, as it was used formerly, in a good sense, so we shall find it, upon better consideration, to be still a good thing for the benefit and peace of mankind; at least, it will appear whether your interpretation of it may be justly applied to the person, who is now the subject of our discourse."

"I call him (said I) a tyrant, who either intrudes himself forcibly into the government of his fellow-citizens without any legal authority over them; or who, having a just title to the government of a people, abuses it to the destruction, or tormenting of them. So that all tyrants are at the same time usurpers, either of the whole, or at least of a part, of that power which they assume to themselves; and no less are they to be accounted rebels, since no man can usurp authority over others, but by rebelling against

[7] Here follow eight stanzas of poetry.

[8] fighting with a shadow.

[9] *helping father.*

them who had it before, or at least against those laws which were his superiors: and in all these senses no history can afford us a more evident example of tyranny, or more out of all possibility of excuse, or palliation, than that of the person whom you are pleased to defend; whether we consider his reiterated rebellions against all his superiors, or his usurpation of the supreme power to himself, or his tyranny in the exercise of it: and, if lawful princes have been esteemed tyrants by not containing themselves within the bounds of those laws which have been left them, as the sphere of their authority, by their forefathers, what shall we say of that man, who, having by right no power at all in this nation, could not content himself with that which had satisfied the most ambitious of our princes? nay, not with those vastly extended limits of sovereignty, which he (disdaining all that had been prescribed and observed before) was pleased (out of great modesty) to set to himself; not abstaining from rebellion and usurpation even against his own laws, as well as those of the nation?"

"Hold, friend, (said his highness, pulling me by my arm) for I see your zeal is transporting you again; whether the protector were a tyrant in the exorbitant exercise of his power, we shall see anon; it is requisite to examine, first, whether he were so in the usurpation of it. And I say, that not only he, but no man else, ever was, or can be so; and that for these reasons. First, because all power belongs only to God, who is the source and fountain of it, as kings are of all honours in their dominions. Princes are but his viceroys in the little provinces of this world; and to some he gives their places for a few years, to some for their lives, and to others (upon ends or deserts best known to himself, or merely for his undisputable good pleasure) he bestows, as it were, leases upon them and their posterity, for such a date of time as is prefixed in that patent of their destiny, which is not legible to you men below. Neither is it more unlawful for Oliver to succeed Charles in the kingdom of England, when God so disposes of it, than it had been for him to have succeeded the Lord Strafford in

the lieutenancy of Ireland, if he had been appointed to it by the king then reigning. Men are in both the cases obliged to obey him whom they see actually invested with the authority by that sovereign from whom he ought to derive it, without disputing or examining the causes, either of the removal of the one, or the preferment of the other. Secondly, because all power is attained either by the election and consent of the people (and that takes away your objection of forcible intrusion) ; or else, by a conquest of them (and that gives such a legal authority as you mention to be wanting in the usurpation of a tyrant) ; so that either this title is right, and then there are no usurpers, or else it is a wrong one, and then there are none else but usurpers, if you examine the original pretences of the princes of the world. Thirdly, (which, quitting the dispute in general, is a particular justification of his highness,) the government of England was totally broken and dissolved, and extinguished by the confusions of a civil war ; so that his highness could not be accused to have possessed himself violently of the antient building of the commonwealth, but to have prudently and peaceably built up a new one out of the ruins and ashes of the former ; and he who after a deplorable shipwreck, can with extraordinary industry gather together the dispersed and broken planks and pieces of it, and with no less wonderful art and felicity so rejoin them as to make a new vessel more tight and beautiful than the old one, deserves, no doubt, to have the command of her (even as his highness had) by the desire of the seamen and passengers themselves. And do but consider, lastly, (for I omit a multitude of weighty things, that might be spoken upon this noble argument) do but consider seriously and impartially with yourself, what admirable parts of wit and prudence, what indefatigable diligence and invincible courage, must of necessity have concurred in the person of that man who, from so contemptible beginnings (as I observed before), and through so many thousand difficulties, was able not only to make himself the greatest and most absolute monarch of this nation ; but to add to it the entire conquest of Ireland and Scot-

land (which the whole force of the world joined with the Roman virtue could never attain to), and to crown all this with illustrious and heroical undertakings and successes upon all our foreign enemies: do but (I say again) consider this, and you will confess that his prodigious merits were a better title to imperial dignity than the blood of an hundred royal progenitors; and will rather lament that he lived not to overcome more nations than envy him the conquest and dominion of these."

"Whoever you are (said I, my indignation making me somewhat bolder) your discourse (methinks) becomes as little the person of a tutelar angel, as Cromwell's actions did that of a protector. It is upon these principles that all the great crimes of the world have been committed, and most particularly those which I have had the misfortune to see in my own time, and in my own country. If these be to be allowed, we must break up human society, retire into woods, and equally there stand upon our guards against our brethren mankind, and our rebels the wild beasts. For, if there can be no usurpation upon the rights of a whole nation, there can be none most certainly upon those of a private person; and, if the robbers of countreys be God's vicegerents, there is no doubt but the thieves and banditos, and murderers, are his under officers. It is true which you say, that God is the source and fountain of all power; and it is no less true, that he is the creator of serpents, as well as angels; nor does his goodness fail of its ends, even in the malice of his own creatures. What power he suffers the devil to exercise in this world, is too apparent by our daily experience; and by nothing more than the late monstrous iniquities which you dispute for, and patronize in England: but would you infer from thence that the power of the devil is a just and lawful one; and that all men ought, as well as most do, obey him? God is the fountain of all powers; but some flow from the rich hand (as it were) of his goodness, and others from the left hand of his justice; and the world, like an island between these two rivers, is sometimes refreshed and nourished by the one, and sometimes over-run and ruined by the

other; and (to continue a little farther the allegory) we are never overwhelmed with the latter, till either by our malice or negligence we have stopped and dammed up the former."[10]

[10] COWLEY continues at some length, refuting with vigor each separate argument of the angel in behalf of Cromwell. The whole *Vision* is a beautiful example of simple, easy, and natural English prose of this time, and is a great contrast to the prose of Milton and Sir Thomas Browne.

X.

2. *SEVERAL DISCOURSES, BY WAY OF ESSAYS, IN VERSE AND PROSE.*

[Written between 1660 and 1667.]

Essay IX. — The Shortness of Life and Uncertainty of Riches.

If you should see a man who were to cross from Dover to Calais, run about very busy and solicitous, and trouble himself many weeks before in making provisions for the voyage, would you commend him for a cautious and discreet person, or laugh at him for a timorous and impertinent coxcomb? A man who is excessive in his pains and diligence, and who consumes the greatest part of his time in furnishing the remainder with all conveniences and even superfluities, is to angels and wise men no less ridiculous; he does as little consider the shortness of his passage that he might proportion his cares accordingly. It is, alas, so narrow a strait betwixt the womb and the grave, that it might be called the *Pas de Vie*, as well as the *Pas de Calais*. We are all ἐφήμεροι,[11] as *Pindar* calls us, creatures of a day, and therefore our Saviour bounds our desires to that little space; as if it were very probable that every day should be our last, we are taught to demand even bread for no longer a time. The sun ought not to set upon our covetousness, no more than upon our anger; but as to God Almighty a thousand years are as one day, so, in direct opposition, one day to the covetous man is as a thousand years, *tam brevi fortis jaculatur ævo multa*,[12] so far he shoots beyond his butt. One would think he were of the opinion of the *Millenaries*, and hoped for so long a reign upon earth. The

[11] *for a day.*

[12] *in so short a life he bravely aims at many things.* — Horace, *Odes*, II. 16, 17.

patriarchs before the flood, who enjoyed almost such a life, made, we are sure, less stores for the maintaining of it; they who lived nine hundred years scarcely provided for a few days; we who live but a few days, provide at least for nine hundred years. What a strange alteration is this of human life and manners! and yet we see an imitation of it in every man's particular experience, for we begin not the cares of life till it be half spent, and still increase them as that decreases. What is there among the actions of beasts so illogical and repugnant to reason? When they do anything which seems to proceed from that which we call reason, we disdain to allow them that perfection, and attribute it only to a natural instinct. If we could but learn to number our days (as we are taught to pray that we might) we should adjust much better our other accounts, but whilst we never consider an end of them, it is no wonder if our cares for them be without end too. Horace advises very wisely, and in excellent good words, *spatio brevi spem longam reseces;*[13] from a short life cut off all hopes that grow too long. They must be pruned away like suckers that choke the mother-plant, and hinder it from bearing fruit. And in another place to the same sense, *Vitæ summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam,*[14] which Seneca does not mend when he says, *O quanta dementia est spes longas inchoantium!*[15] but he gives an example there of an acquaintance of his named Senecio, who from a very mean beginning by great industry in turning about of money through all ways of gain, had attained to extraordinary riches, but died on a sudden after having supped merrily, *In ipso actu benè cedentium rerum, in ipso procurrentis fortunæ* [*pecuniæ*] *impetu;*[16] in the full course of his good fortune, when

[13] HORACE, *Odes*, I. 11, 7.

[14] *The short sum of life forbids our indulging long hopes.* — HORACE, *Odes*, I. 4, 15.

[15] *Oh how great is the madness of those who indulge long hopes.* — SENECA, *Epistles*, 101, 4.

[16] *On the very point of success, at the very moment of advancing fortune.* — SENECA, *Epistles*, 101, 4.

she had a high tide and a stiff gale and all her sails on; upon which occasion he cries, out of Virgil:

Insere nunc, Melibœe, pyros, pone ordine vites:[17]

Go to, Melibæus, now,
Go graff thy orchards and thy vineyards plant;
Behold the fruit!

For this Senecio I have no compassion, because he was taken, as we say, *in ipso facto*, still labouring in the work of avarice; but the poor rich man in St. Luke (whose case was not like this) I could pity, methinks, if the Scripture would permit me, for he seems to have been satisfied at last; he confesses he had enough for many years; he bids his soul take its ease; and yet for all that, God says to him, "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee, and the things thou hast laid up, whom shall they belong to?" Where shall we find the causes of this bitter reproach and terrible judgment; we may find, I think, two, and God perhaps saw more. First, that he did not intend true rest to the soul, but only to change the employments of it from avarice to luxury; his design is to eat and to drink, and to be merry. Secondly, that he went on too long before he thought of resting; the fulness of his old barns had not sufficed him, he would stay till he was forced to build new ones; and God meted out to him in the same measure; since he would have more riches than his life could contain, God destroyed his life and gave the fruits of it to another.

Thus God takes away sometimes the man from his riches, and no less frequently riches from the man: what hope can there be of such a marriage where both parties are so fickle and uncertain; by what bonds can such a couple be kept long together?[18]

[17] VIRGIL, *Eclogues*, I. 74.

[18] Here follow thirteen quatrains on the same theme.

Essay XI. — Of Myself.

It is a hard and nice subject for a man to write of himself; it grates his own heart to say anything of disparagement and the reader's ears to hear anything of praise for him. There is no danger from me of offending him in this kind; neither my mind, nor my body, nor my fortune allow me any materials for that vanity. It is sufficient for my own contentment that they have preserved me from being scandalous, or remarkable on the defective side. But besides that, I shall here speak of myself only in relation to the subject of these precedent discourses, and shall be likelier thereby to fall into the contempt than rise up to the estimation of most people. As far as my memory can return back into my past life, before I knew or was capable of guessing what the world, or glories, or business of it were, the natural affections of my soul gave me a secret bent of aversion from them, as some plants are said to turn away from others, by an antipathy imperceptible to themselves and inscrutable to man's understanding. Even when I was a very young boy at school, instead of running about on holidays and playing with my fellows, I was wont to steal from them and walk into the fields, either alone with a book, or with some one companion, if I could find any of the same temper. I was then, too, so much an enemy to all constraint, that my masters could never prevail on me, by any persuasions or encouragements, to learn without book the common rules of grammar, in which they dispensed with me alone, because they found I made a shift to do the usual exercises out of my own reading and observation. That I was then of the same mind as I am now (which, I confess, I wonder at myself) may appear by the latter end of an ode which I made when I was but thirteen years old, and which was then printed with many other verses. The beginning of it is boyish, but of this part which I here set down, if a very little were corrected, I should hardly now be much ashamed.

IX.

This only grant me, that my means may lie
Too low for envy, for contempt too high.
Some honour I would have,
Not from great deeds, but good alone.
The unknown are better than ill-known;
Rumour can ope the grave.
Acquaintance I would have, but when't depends
Not on the number, but the choice of friends.

X.

Books should, not business, entertain the light,
And sleep, as undisturb'd as death, the night.
My house a cottage more
Than palace, and should fitting be
For all my use, no luxury.
My garden painted o'er
With Nature's hand, not Art's; and pleasures yield,
Horace might envy in his Sabine field.

XI.

Thus would I double my life's fading space;
For he that runs it well twice runs his race.
And in this true delight,
These unbought sports, this happy state,
I would not fear, nor wish, my fate;
But boldly say each night,
To-morrow let my sun his beams display,
Or in clouds hide them, — I have liv'd to-day.

You may see by it I was even then acquainted with the poets (for the conclusion is taken out of Horace),[19] and perhaps it was the immature and immoderate love of them which stamped first, or rather engraved, these characters in me. They were like letters cut into the bark of a young tree, which with the tree still grow proportionably. But how this love came to be produced in me so easily is a hard question. I believe I can tell the particular

[19] HORACE, *Odes*, III, 29, 41 *ff.*

little chance that filled my head first with such chimes of verse as have never since left ringing there. For, I remember when I began to read, and to take some pleasure in it, there was wont to lie in my mother's parlour (I know not by what accident, for she herself never in her life read any book but of devotion), but there was wont to lie Spenser's works; this I happened to fall upon, and was infinitely delighted with the stories of the knights, and giants, and monsters, and brave houses, which I found everywhere there (though my understanding had little to do with all this); and by degrees with the tinkling of the rhyme and dance of the numbers, so that I think I had read him all over before I was twelve years old. . . . With these affections of mind, and my heart wholly set upon letters, I went to the university, but was soon torn from thence by that violent public storm which would suffer nothing to stand where it did, but rooted up every plant, even from the princely cedars to me, the hyssop. Yet I had as good fortune as could have befallen me in such a tempest; for I was cast by it into the family of one of the best persons, and into the court of one of the best princesses of the world. Now, though I was here engaged in ways most contrary to the original design of my life, that is, into much company, and no small business, and into a daily sight of greatness, both militant and triumphant, for that was the state then of the English and French Courts; yet all this was so far from altering my opinion, that it only added the confirmation of reason to that which was before but natural inclination. I saw plainly all the paint of that kind of life, the nearer I came to it; and that beauty which I did not fall in love with when, for aught I knew, it was real, was not like to bewitch or entice me when I saw that it was adulterate. I met with several great persons, whom I liked very well, but could not perceive that any part of their greatness was to be liked or desired, no more than I would be glad or content to be in a storm, though I saw many ships which rid safely and bravely in it. A storm would not agree with my stomach, if it did with my courage. Though I was in a crowd of as good company as could be found anywhere,

though I was in business of great and honourable trust, though I eat at the best table, and enjoyed the best conveniences for present subsistence that ought to be desired by a man of my condition in banishment and public distresses, yet I could not abstain from renewing my old schoolboy's wish in a copy of verses to the same effect:

> Well then; I now do plainly see,
> This busy world and I shall ne'er agree, etc.[20]

And I never then proposed to myself any other advantage from His Majesty's happy Restoration, but the getting into some moderately convenient retreat in the country, which I thought in that case I might easily have compassed, as well as some others,[21] with no greater probabilities or pretences have arrived to extraordinary fortunes. But I had before written a shrewd prophecy against myself, and I think Apollo inspired me in the truth, though not in the elegance of it:

> Thou, neither great at court nor in the war,
> Nor at th' exchange shalt be, nor at the wrangling bar;
> Content thyself with the small barren praise,
> Which neglected verse does raise, etc.[22]

However, by the failing of the forces which I had expected, I did not quit the design which I had resolved on; I cast myself into it *à corps perdu*,[23] without making capitulations or taking counsel of fortune. But God laughs at a man who says to his soul, "take thy ease": I met presently not only with many little encumbrances and impediments, but with so much sickness (a new misfortune to me) as would have spoiled the happiness of an emperor as well as mine. Yet I do neither repent nor alter my course. *Non ego perfidum dixi sacramentum*.[24] Nothing shall separate me from a mistress which I have loved so long, and have

[20] From *The Wish*. [21] relative omitted.

[22] COWLEY inserts two stanzas from one of his *Pindaric Odes*.

[23] *with heart and soul*.

[24] *I did not take a treacherous oath*. — HORACE, *Odes*, II. 17, 10.

now at last married, though she neither has brought me a rich portion, nor lived yet so quietly with me as I hoped from her.

> ——— *Nec vos, dulcissima mundi*
> *Nomina, vos, Musæ, libertas, otia, libri,*
> *Hortique sylvæque, anima remanente, relinquam.*
>
> Nor by me e'er shall you,
> You, of all names the sweetest and the best,
> You, Muses, books, and liberty, and rest;
> You, gardens, fields, and woods, forsaken be,
> As long as life itself forsakes not me.

But this is a very pretty ejaculation. Because I have concluded all the other chapters with a copy of verses, I will maintain the humour to the last.[25]

[25] Here follow two poetical translations from MARTIAL, *Epigrams*, Book X. 47 and 96.

XI.

EDWARD HYDE, EARL OF CLARENDON.

(1608–1674.)

ESSAYS, MORAL AND ENTERTAINING.

Essay III. — Reflections on the Happiness which we may enjoy in and from ourselves.

[Written in 1669.]

It was a very just reproach that Seneca charged the world with so many hundred years ago, and yet was not more the disease of that than of this age, that we wonder and complain of the pride and superciliousness of those who are in place and authority above us: that we cannot get an admittance to them; that they are never at leisure that we may speak to them; when (says he) we are never vacant, never at leisure to speak to ourselves; "*Audet quispiam de alterius superbiâ queri qui sibi ipse nunquam vacat?*"[1] and after all complaints and murmurs, the greatest and the proudest of them will be sometimes at leisure, may be sometimes spoken with; "*aliquando respexit, tu non inspicere te unquam, non audire dignatus es*";[2] we can never get an audience of ourselves, never vouchsafe to confer together. We are diligent and curious enough to know other men; and it may be charitable enough to assist them, to inform their weakness by our instruction, and to reform their errors by our experience: and all this

[1] *Does any one dare to complain of the pride of another who is never at leisure for himself?* — Seneca.

[2] *He sometimes paid attention* (lit. looked back); *you never deigned to look within, to listen to yourself.* — Seneca.

without giving one moment to look into our own, never make an inspection into ourselves, nor ask one of those questions of ourselves which we are ready to administer to others, and thereby imagine that we have a perfect knowledge of them. We live with other men, and to other men; neither with nor to ourselves. We may sometimes be at home, left to ourselves, when others are weary of us, and we are weary of being with them; but we do not dwell at home, have no commerce, no conversation with ourselves, nay, we keep spies about us that we may not have; and if we feel a suggestion, hear an importunate call from within, we divert it by company or quiet it with sleep; and when we wake, no man runs faster from an enemy than we do from ourselves, get to our friends that we may not be with ourselves. This is not only an epidemical disease that spreads everywhere, but effected and purchased at as great a price as most other of our diseases, with the expense of all our precious time; one moment of which we are not willing to bestow upon ourselves, though it would make the remainder of it more useful to us, and to others upon whom we prodigally consume it, without doing good to them or ourselves: whereas, if we would be conversant with ourselves, and as ingenuous and impartial in that conversation as we pretend to be with other men, we should find that we have very much of that at home by us, which we take wonderful unnecessary pains to get abroad; and that we have much of that in our own disposal, which we endeavour to obtain from others; and possess ourselves of that happiness from ourselves, whether it concerns our ambition or any other of our most exorbitant passions or affections, which more provoke and less satisfy by resorting to other men; who are either not willing to gratify us or not able to comply with our desires; and the trouble and agony, which for the most part accompanies those disappointments, proceed merely from our not beginning with ourselves before we repair to others.

It is not the purpose and end of this discourse, to raise such seraphical notions of the vanity and pleasures of this world, as if they were not worthy to be considered, or could have no

relish with virtuous and pious men. They take very unprofitable pains, who endeavour to persuade men that they are obliged wholly to despise this world and all that is in it, even whilst they themselves live here: God hath not taken all that pains in forming and framing and furnishing and adorning this world, that they who were made by him to live in it should despise it; it will be enough if they do not love it so immoderately, to prefer it before Him who made it: nor shall we endeavour to extend the notions of the Stoic philosophers, and to stretch them farther by the help of Christian precepts, to the extinguishing all those affections and passions, which are and will always be inseparable from human nature; and which it were to be wished that many Christians could govern and suppress and regulate, as well as many of those heathen philosophers used to do. As long as the world lasts, and honour and virtue and industry have reputation in the world, there will be ambition and emulation and appetite in the best and most accomplished men who live in it; if there should not be, more barbarity and vice and wickedness would cover every nation of the world, than it yet suffers under. If wise and honest and virtuously-disposed men quit the field, and leave the world to the pillage, and the manners of it to the deformation of persons dedicated to rapine, luxury, and injustice, how savage must it grow in half an age! nor will the best princes be able to govern and preserve their subjects, if the best men be without ambition and desire to be employed and trusted by them. The end therefore of this speculation into ourselves, and conversation with ourselves, is that we may make our journey towards that which we do propose with the more success; that we may be discreet in proposing reasonable designs, and then pursue them by reasonable ways; foresee all the difficulties which are probable to fall out, so we may prevent or avoid them; since we may be sure to master and avoid them to a great degree by foreseeing them, and as sure to be confounded by them, if they fall upon us without foresight. In a word, it is not so to consult with ourselves, as to consult with nobody else; or to dispose us to prefer our own judgment before

any other man's: but first, by an impartial conference with ourselves, we may understand first our own mind, what it is we would have, and why we would have it, before we consult with others which way to compass it, that we may set both the matter we desire and the manner of obtaining it before our own eyes, and spend our passions upon ourselves in the disquisition.

It is no wonder that when we are prodigal of nothing else, when we are over-thrifty of many things which we may well spare, we are very prodigal of our time, which is the only precious jewel of which we cannot be too thrifty, because we look upon it as nothing worth, and that makes us not care how we spend it. The labouring man and the artificer knows what every hour of his time is worth, what it will yield him, and parts not with it but for the full value: they are only noblemen and gentlemen, who should know best how to use it, that think it only fit to be cast away; and their not knowing how to set a true value upon this, is the true cause of the wrong estimate they make of all other things: and their ignorance of that proceeds only from their holding no correspondence with themselves, or thinking at all before they begin their journey, before they violently set their affections upon this or that object, until they find they are out of the way, and meet with false guides to carry them further out. We should find much ease in our pursuits, and probably much better success in our attempts and enterprises in the world, if, before we are too solicitous and set our heart upon any design, we would well weigh and consider the true value of the thing we desire, whether it be indeed worth all that trouble we shall be put to, and all the time we are like to spend in the obtaining it, and upon it after we have obtained it: if this inquisition doth not divert us, as it need not to do, it will the better prepare and dispose us to be satisfied after we have it, whereas nothing is more usual than for men who succeed in their most impatient pretences, to be more unsatisfied with their success than they were before; it is not worth what they thought or were persuaded it would be, so that their appetite is not at all allayed, nor their gratitude provoked, by the obli-

gation; a little previous consideration would have better fitted the mind to contentedness upon the issue, or diverted it from affecting what would not be acceptable when obtained. In the next place, we should do well prudently to consider, whether it be probable that we shall obtain what we desire, before we engage our affections and our passions too deeply in the prosecution of it; not that we may not lawfully affect and prosecute an interest in which it is probable we may not succeed. Men who always succeed in what they go about, are often the worse for their success; however, we are not naturally delighted with repulses, and are commonly angry and sottishly offended with those who obtain that for themselves which we would fain have, and as unreasonably with those who favour them, though their merit be above our own; and therefore, besides the consideration of the probability that we may be disappointed of our end, we shall do well to consider likewise the opposition we are like to meet in the way, the power of those persons who are like to disfavour our pretences, and whether our exposing ourselves to their displeasure may not be a greater damage than the obtaining all that we desire will recompense. These and the like reflections will cost us very little time, but infinitely advance and improve our understanding; and if we then conclude it fit to proceed, we shall do it with confidence, and be disturbed with no accident which encounters us, and be prepared to behave ourselves decently upon the repulse, which oftentimes prefers men better than they wished; a virtuous mind appearing with more lustre in the rejection than in the reception of good turns, and consequently reconciling him to those who knew him not enough before.

These considerations will be most impartially and sincerely debated with ourselves, yet they may be properly enough and usefully consulted with very true and faithful friends, if indeed we abound with such treasure. But there is another consideration so proper and peculiar for ourselves, and to be exactly weighed by ourselves, that the most faithful friend is rarely faithful enough to be trusted enough in the disquisition, and, which is worst of all,

we do not wish or desire that he should be faithful; that is, whether we are in truth fit and worthy of the thing we do affect; if it be an honour, whether it be not too great for us; if it be an office, whether we are equal to it; that is, fit and capable to discharge and execute it, or can make ourselves so by the industry and diligence we are like to contribute towards it: this is the examination we come with least ingenuity to, and friends are ingenuous in assisting us in; and yet is of that importance, that much of the happiness of our life consists in it, many having been made unhappy and even very miserable by preferment, who were in good reputation without it. Tully makes it a necessary ingredient in, or a necessary concomitant of friendship itself. "*Tantum cuique tribuendum est, primum, quantum ipse efficere possis, deinde etiam quantum quem diligas atque adjuves, possit sustinere;*"[3] it is a very imprudent and unjust thing to oblige a friend to do that out of his friendship to thee, which either he cannot do, or not without great prejudice to himself, but it is an impudent violation of friendship, to importune him to procure a favour to be conferred upon thee which thou canst not sustain; to put the command of a ship into thy hand, when thou knowest neither the compass nor the rudder. There are as great incongruities and incapacities towards the execution of many offices, which do not appear so gross to the first discovery. This scrutiny cannot be so rigidly and effectually made without well weighing, in the first place, the infinite prejudice that befalls ourselves, if we are incompetent for that place or office which we have by much solicitation obtained, and the unspeakable and irreparable prejudice we have brought upon our friends who obtained it for us. How many men have we known, who, from a reservedness in their nature, have been thought to observe much, and by saying little have been believed to know much; but when they have got themselves into an office, and so been compelled to speak and direct, have appeared weak and ignorant, and incapable of performing their duty;

[3] *So much must be given to each one, first, as you yourself can perform, next, also, as he whom you love and aid can sustain.* — CICERO.

and so must either be removed, to their own shame and reproach, or be continued, to the public detriment and dishonour? How much better had it been for such men to have remained unknown and secure under the shadow of their friends' good opinion, than to have been exposed to the light, and made known only by the discovery of their incredible ignorance! We have known many men who, in a place to which they have been unhappily promoted, have appeared scandalously insufficient; but being removed to another have discharged it with notable abilities: yet there was nothing new in himself; if he had asked advice of himself, he would have known all that hath fallen out since so much to his prejudice. He who hath credit with his prince, or with his friend, to prefer or recommend a man to his near and entire trust, hath a great trust himself reposed in him, which he is obliged to discharge with the utmost circumspection and fidelity; and if he be swayed by the confidence and importunity, or corrupted by his own affection, and recommends thee to an employment, which when thou art possessed of thou canst not discharge, with what confusion must he look upon him whom he hath deceived and betrayed, or can he ever look again to be depended upon or advised with upon the like affair? Doing good offices and good turns (as men call it) looks like the natural effect of a noble and a generous nature. Indeed the inclination to it is an argument of generosity; but a precipitate entering upon the work itself, and embracing all opportunities to gratify the pretences of unwary men, is an evidence of a light and easy nature, disposed, at other men's charges, to get himself well spoken of.

They who revolve these particulars, cannot but think them worthy a very serious examination, and must discern that, by entering into this strict consultation with themselves in or before the beginning of any business, they shall prevent much trouble and labour which they shall not be able afterwards to avoid: nor can they prudently or so successfully consult with others, before they first deliberate with themselves the very method and manner of communicating with another, how much a friend soever, what

concerns one's self requiring as much consideration as the matter itself. But there is another benefit and advantage that results from this intercourse and acquaintance with ourselves, more considerable than anything which hath been said, which is, that from this communication he takes more care to cultivate and improve himself, that he may be equal and worthy of that trust which he reposes in himself, and fit to consult with and govern himself by; he gets as much information from books and wise men, as may enable him to answer and determine those doubtful questions which may arise; he extinguishes that choler and prejudice which would interrupt him in hearing, and corrupt him in judging what he hears. It is a notable injunction that Seneca imposes, who knew as well as any man what man could bring himself to "*Dum te efficis eum, coram quo peccare non audeas;*"[4] the truth is, he hath too little reverence for himself, who dares do that in his own presence, which he would be ashamed, or not dare to do before another man; and it is for want of acquaintance with ourselves and revolving the dignity of our creation, that we are without that reverence. Who, that doth consider how near he is of kin to God himself, and how excellently he is qualified by him to judge aright of all the delusions and appearances of the world, if he will employ those faculties he hath adorned him with; that nobody is able to deceive him, if he doth not concur and contribute to the deceiving himself: I say, who can consider and weigh this, and at the same time bury all those faculties of the discerning soul in sensual pleasures, laziness, and senseless inactivity and as much as in his power, and God knows there is too much in his power, to level himself with the beasts that perish? It is a foolish excuse we make upon all occasions for ourselves and other men, in our laboured and exalted acts of folly and madness, that we can be no wiser than God hath made us, as if the defects in our will were defects in his providence; when in truth God hath given us all that we will make ourselves capable of, that we will receive from him.

[4] *Whilst thou makest thyself one in whose presence thou dare not sin.* — SENECA.

He hath given us life, that is time, to make ourselves learned. to make ourselves wise, to make us discern and judge of all the mysteries of the world: if we will bestow this time, which would supply us with wisdom and knowledge, in wine and women, which corrupt the little understanding that nature hath given us; if we will barter it away for skill in horses, dogs, and hawks; and if we will throw it away in play and gaming; it is from our own villany that we are fools, and have rejected the effects of his providence. It is no wiser an allegation, that our time is our own, and we may use it as we please: there is nothing so much our own that we may use it as we please: we cannot use our money, which is as much, if not more, our own than anything we have, to raise rebellion against our prince, or to hire men to do mischief to our neighbours; we cannot use our bodies, which, if anything, are our own, in duels or any unlawful enterprise: and why should we then believe that we have so absolute and sovereign a disposal of our time, that we may choose whether we will dispose it to anything or no? It were to be wished that all men did believe, which they have all great reason to do, that the consumption and spending of our time will be the great inquisition of the last and terrible day: when there shall be a more strict enquiry how the most dissolute person, the most debauched bankrupt, spent his time, than how he spent his estate; no doubt it will then manifestly appear that our precious time was not lent to us to do nothing with, or to be spent upon that which is worse than nothing; and we shall not be more confounded with anything, than to find that there is a perfect register kept of all that we did in that time; and that when we have scarce remembered the morrow what we did yesterday, there is a diary in which nothing we did is left out, and as much notice taken when we did nothing at all. This will be a sad animadversion when it is too late, and when probably it may appear that the very idle man, he who hath never employed himself, may be in a very little better condition than he who hath been worst employed; when idleness shall be declared to be a species of wickedness, and doing nothing to be the activity of a

beast. There cannot therefore be too serious or too early a reflection upon the good husbandry of this precious talent, which we are entrusted with, not to be laid out in vain pleasures whereof we are ashamed as soon as we have enjoyed them, but in such profitable exchanges that there may be some record of our industry, if there be none of our getting.

The truth is, if incogitance[5] and inadvertence, not thinking at all, not considering anything (which is degrading ourselves as much as is in our power from being men, by renouncing the faculties of a reasonable soul) were not our mortal disease, it might be believed that the consumption of our time proceeds from the contempt we have of wisdom and virtue; for in order to anything else we employ it well enough. How can we pretend that we desire to be wise, when we do no one thing that is in order to it; or that we love virtue, when we do not cultivate any one affection that would advance it, nor subdue any one passion that destroys it? We see the skill and perfection in the meanest and lowest trade is obtained by industry and instruction and observation, and that with all that application very much time is necessary to it; and can we believe that wisdom, which is the greatest perfection and highest operation of the soul can be got without industry and labour? Can we hope to find gold upon the surface of the earth, when we dig almost to the centre of it to find lead and tin and the coarser metals? It is very wonderful if it be not very ridiculous, to see a man take great pains to learn to dance, and not to be at leisure to learn to read; that man should set a very high esteem upon the decent motion and handsome figure of the body, and undervalue the mind so much as not to think it worth any pains or consideration to improve the faculties thereof, or to contribute to its endowments; and yet all men's experience supplies them with evidence enough, that the excellent symmetry of the body, a very handsome outside of a man, doth too frequently expose men to derision and notorious contempt, when so gross defects of the mind are discovered, as make the other beauty less agreeable by

[5] lack of thought.

being more remarkable: whereas, on the contrary, the beauty of the mind doth more frequently reconcile the eyes and ears of all men to the most unpromising countenances, and to persons nothing beholden to nature for any comeliness; yet the wisdom and gravity of their words in persuading and convincing, and the sincerity and virtue of their actions, extort an esteem and reverence from all kind of men, that no comely and graceful outside of a man could ever attain to. It is not to be wished that men took less care of their bodies than they do; they cannot be too solicitous to preserve their health, and to confirm it, by preventing those diseases which the excess and corruption of humours are naturally the causes of, with timely physic and seasonable application of remedies, and, above all, by strict and wholesome diet; health is so inestimable a blessing and benefit, that we cannot take too much pains, nor study too much, to obtain and preserve it: but the grief is, that the whole care is laid out for the body, and none at all for the mind; that we are jealous of every alteration in our constitution, of every light indisposition of our body, that we too commonly apply cures when there are no diseases, and cause the sickness we would prevent: when, at the same time, there are twenty visible diseases and distempers of our mind, which we never look after nor take care of, though they would be more easily cured than the other, and being cured, would yield that infinite pleasure and satisfaction to the body, that sickness itself could not deprive it of. Dost thou find laziness and excess of sleep affect thy body? And dost thou find exercise and moderate labour revive thy spirits, and increase thy appetite? Examine thy mind, whether it hath not too much emptiness, whether it can *cogitandi ferre laborem*, — whether it can bear the fatigue of thinking, — and produce any conclusion from thence; and then administer a fit diet of books to it, and let it take air and exercise in honest and cheerful conversation, with men that can descend and bow their natures and their understandings to the capacity and to the indisposition and weakness of other men. A sour and morose companion is as unnatural a prescription to such a patient,

as the exercise of tennis is to a man who hath broken a vein, when any violent motion may be mortal. If thy mind be loose, and most delighted with vain and unclean discourses and unchaste desires, prescribe it a diet of contemplation upon the purity of the nature of God, and the injunction he hath given us to live by, and the frequent conquest men have made thereby upon their own most corrupt and depraved affections; and let it have its exercise and recreation with men of that severity, that restrain all ill discourse by the gravity of their presence, and yet of that candour as may make them agreeable to those who must by degrees be brought to love them, and to find another kind of pleasure, yet pleasure that hath a greater relish in their company than in those they have been most accustomed to. Men give over the diseases of the mind as incurable; call them infirmities of nature, which cannot be subdued, hardly corrected; or substantial parts of nature, that cannot be cut off, or divided from our humanity; that anger is the result of a generous nature, that will not, ought not to submit to injuries and affronts; that lust is so inseparable from our nature, that nothing but want of health can allay it; that there is no other way to cure the disease but to kill the patient, that it proceeds not from any virtuous habit of the mind, where these natural affections and appetites do not prevail, but from some depraved constitution of the body, which stifles and suppresses those desires, for want of that moisture and heat that should nourish them, and that conscience hath no more to do in the conquest, than courage hath an operation in him who takes an enemy prisoner who lies prostrate at his feet: whereas all those, and other diseases of the mind, for diseases they are, are much more curable than those of the body, and so much the more as they are most subject to our own administration; when we must resort to the skill and ability of other men to devise and compound proper remedies for the other cure. Many accidents of heat or cold or diet, or the very remedies prescribed, very often make the diseases of the body incurable, and the recovery impossible; whereas the application to the mind, though unskil-

fully and unseasonably made, does no harm if it does no good, and the mind remains still as capable of the same or other medicines as it was before. Nor is there any enormous or unruly infirmity so annexed to or rooted in our nature, but that the like hath been frequently severed from or eradicated out of it, by virtuous and conscientious precepts and practice, and every man's observation and experience supplies him with examples enough of men far from sobriety, who, to comply with some infirmity, have forborne all wine and intemperance for some months; and of others of no restrained appetites, who upon the obligation of a promise or virtuous resolution, have abstained a longer time from any acts of uncleanness; and whosoever can impose such a law upon himself for so many months, can do the same for so many years; a firm and magnanimous resolution can exercise that discipline upon the mind that it shall never make any excursions from reason and good behaviour. If they can be brought but *laborem ferre cogitandi*, the worst is over, and their recovery is not desperate.

Since then it is and may be made evident enough that the greatest infirmities and deformities of the mind may be reformed and rectified by industry and reasonable applications, there can be but one reason why there is so little used in those cases, since all men desire to be wise, or to be reputed wise; and that is, that there is no need of it: nature's store and provision is sufficient; conversation with witty men, and an ordinary observation of the current and conduct of business, will make men as wise as they need to be; and the affectation of books doth but introduce pedantry into the manners of men, and make them impertinent and troublesome: that men of great learning in books are frequently found to be the most incompetent judges or advisers in the most important transactions of the affairs of the world, and of the interest of states. And by this unreasonable jolly discourse, and contempt of the learned languages, there seems to be a combination entered into against learning, and against any such education as may dispose them to it: as if the excellent endowments of

nature would be eclipsed by reading books, and would hinder them from learning more in the company they might keep than they can obtain from other, and that the other method makes them men much sooner: and upon this ground, which hath gotten too much countenance in the world, the universities and inns of court which have been the seminaries out of which our ancestors have grown to be able to serve their country with great reputation and success, are now declined as places which keep hopeful youth too long boys, and infect them with formalities and impertinent knowledge, of which they shall have little use, and send them out late and less prepared for and inclined to those generous qualifications, which are most like to raise their fortunes and their reputations. Which sure is a very great error, and hath been the source from whence many mischiefs have flowed. And to speak first of this extolled breeding in good company and travel into foreign parts before they know any thing of their own country; and getting the vice and the language of that, before they can secure themselves from the one, or understand their own native tongue; we have the knowledge and experience of many who have, indeed, the confidence and presumption of men, but retain the levity and folly of children: and if they are able to disguise those weaknesses, and appear in their behaviour and discourse earlier men than others of their age seem to be (as it many times falls out, especially in men endowed with any principles of modesty,) yet those very early men decay apace, for want of nourishment at the roots, and we too frequently see those who seem men at twenty years of age, when the gaiety of their youth decays, and themselves grow weary of those exercises and vanities which then became them, become boys at thirty; having no supply of parts for business, or grave and sober conversation, they then grow out of love with themselves, and too soon lament those defects and impotency in themselves, which nothing but some degree of learning and acquaintance with books could have prevented. And to say that they can fall to it afterwards, and recover the time they have lost when they will, is no more reasonable (though there have been some very rare

examples of such industry) than to imagine that a man, after he is forty years of age, may learn to dance as well as if he had begun it sooner. He who loves not books before he comes to thirty years of age, will hardly love them enough afterwards to understand them. The conversation with wise and good men cannot be overvalued, it forms the mind and understanding for noble and heroical undertakings, and is much to be preferred before the mere learning of books, in order to be wise; but where a good foundation of the knowledge and understanding of books is first laid, to support the excellent superstructure of such conversation, the advance must be made much more advantageously, than when nothing but the ordinary endowments of nature are brought to be cultivated by conversation; which is commonly chosen with men of the same talents, who gratify one another with believing that they want not any extraordinary improvement, and so join together in censuring and condemning what they do not understand, and think that men have only better fortune than they who have got credit without being in any degree wiser than themselves.

It is very true, there have been very extraordinary men in all nations, who, by their great experience, and a notable vivacity of spirit, have not only attained to eminent promotion, but have been exceedingly worthy of it; albeit they have been upon the matter illiterate, as to the learning of books and the learned languages; but then they have been eminently industrious, who, having had the good fortune to be educated in constant labour, under wise and experienced men, have, by indefatigable pains and observation, gotten the learning of business without the learning of books, and cannot properly be accounted illiterate, though they know little Latin or Greek. We speak of books and learning, not of the language in which they are writ. The French and the Italian and the Spanish have many excellent books of all kinds; and they who are well versed in those languages, may be very learned, though they know no others: and the truth is, the French, whether by the fertility of their language, or the happy industry of many excellent persons, have translated most good authors both of the

Greek and Latin, with that admirable facility that little of the spirit and vigour even of the style of the best writers is diminished; an advantage the English industry and curiosity hath not yet brought home to that nation: they who have performed that office hitherto, for the most part, having done it for profit, and to live, without any delight in the pains they take; and though they may have had some competent knowledge of the language out of which they have translated, have been very far from understanding their own mother-tongue, and being versed in the fruitful productions of the English language. But though learning may be thus attained by many nations in their own proper dialect, and the language of their own country, yet few men who take the pains to search for it in their own, but have the curiosity to look into the original, and are conversant in those which are still, and still will be, called the learned languages; nor is yet any man eminent for knowledge and learning that was not conversant in other tongues besides his own; and it may be, those two necessary sciences, that is, the principles of them, grammar and logic, can very hardly be so well and conveniently taught and understood as by Latin. It shall serve my turn, and I shall willingly comply with and gratify our beloved modern education, if they take the pains to read good books in that language they understand best and like most; I had almost said, if they will read any books, be so much alone as reading employs; if they will take as much pains to be wise and polish their minds, as they do to order and dispose their clothes and their hair; if they will put that constraint upon themselves in order to be learned, as they do to attain to a perfection in any bodily exercise; and, lastly, which is worth all the rest, if they will as heartily endeavour to please God, as they do those for whom they have no great affection, every great man whose favour they solicit, and affect being good Christians as much as they do to be fine gentlemen, they shall find their labour as much less, as their reward and recompense will be greater. If they will not do this, they must not take it ill if it be believed that they are without knowledge that their souls are to outlive their bodies; and that

they do not so much wish to go to Heaven, as to get the next bet at play, or to win the next horse-race they are to run.

To conclude: If books and industry will not contribute to their being wise, and to their salvation, they will receive from it (which they value more) pleasure and refreshment in this world; they will have less melancholy in the distress of their fortune, less anxiety in the mortification of sickness; they will not so much complain for want of company, when all their companions forsake them; their age will be less grievous unto them; and God may so bless it, without any intention of their own, that such thoughts may insensibly insinuate themselves into them, that they may go out of the world with less dismal apprehensions, and conclude their neglected lives with more tranquillity of spirit, at least not be so much terrified with the approach of death, as men who have never entertained any sober thoughts of life have used to be, and naturally must be.

XII.

SIR WILLIAM TEMPLE.

(1628–1699.)

ESSAY UPON THE ANCIENT AND MODERN LEARNING.

[Written before 1688.]

THUS much I thought might be allowed me to say, for the giving some idea of what those sages or learned men were, or may have been, who were ancients to those that are ancients to us. Now to observe what these have been, is more easy and obvious. The most ancient Grecians that we are at all acquainted with, after Lycurgus, who was certainly a great philosopher as well as lawgiver, were the seven sages: though the Court of Croesus is said to have been much resorted to by the sophists of Greece in the happy beginnings of his reign. And some of these seven seem to have brought most of the sciences out of Egypt and Phœnica into Greece; particularly those of astronomy, astrology, geometry, and arithmetic. These were soon followed by Pythagoras (who seems to have introduced natural and moral philosophy) and by several of his followers, both in Greece and Italy. But of all these there remains nothing in writing now among us; so that Hippocrates, Plato, and Xenophon, are the first philosophers whose works have escaped the injuries of time. But that we may not conclude the first writers we have of the Grecians were the first learned or wise among them; we shall find upon enquiry that the more ancient sages of Greece appear, by the characters remaining of them, to have been much the greater men. They were generally princes or lawgivers of their countries, or at least offered and invited to be so, either of their own or of others, that

desired them to frame or reform their several institutions of civil government. They were commonly excellent poets, and great physicians: they were so learned in natural philosophy that they foretold not only eclipses in the heavens, but earthquakes at land, and storms at sea, great droughts, and great plagues, much plenty, or much scarcity of certain sorts of fruits or grain; not to mention the magical powers attributed to several of them, to allay storms, to raise gales, to appease commotions of people, to make plagues cease; which qualities, whether upon any ground of truth or no, yet, if well believed, must have raised them to that strange height they were at, of common esteem and honour, in their own and succeeding ages.

By all this may be determined whether our moderns or our ancients may have had the greater and the better guides, and which of them have taken the greater pains, and with the more application in the pursuit of knowledge. And, I think, it is enough to shew that the advantages we have from those we call the ancients may not be greater than what they had from those that were so to them.

But after all, I do not know whether the high flights of wit and knowledge, like those of power and of empire in the world, may not have been made by the pure native force of spirit or genius, in some single men, rather than by any derived strength among them, however increased by succession; and whether they may not have been the atchievements of nature, rather than the improvements of art. Thus the conquests of Ninus and Semiramis, of Alexander and Tamerlane, which I take to have been the greatest recorded in story, were at their height in those persons that began them; and so far from being increased by their successors, that they were not preserved in their extent and vigour by any of them, grew weaker in every hand they passed through, or were divided into many that set up for great Princes, out of several small ruins of the first empires, till they withered away in time, or were lost by the change of names, and forms of families or governments.

Just the same fate seems to have attended the highest flights of learning and of knowledge, that are upon our registers. Thales, Pythagoras, Democritus, Hippocrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, were the first mighty conquerors of ignorance in our world, and made greater progress in the several empires of science than any of their successors have been since able to reach. These have hardly ever pretended more than to learn what the others taught, to remember what they invented, and, not able to compass that itself, they have set up for authors upon some parcels of those great stocks, or else have contented themselves only to comment upon those texts, and make the best copies they could, after those originals.

I have long thought that the different abilities of men, which we call wisdom or prudence for the conduct of public affairs or private life, grow directly out of that little grain of intellect or good sense which they bring with them into our world; and that the defect of it in men comes from some want in their conception or birth.

Dixitque semel nascentibus auctor,
Quicquid scire licet.[1]

And though this may be improved or impaired in some degree by accidents of education, of study, and of conversation and business, yet it cannot go beyond the reach of its native force, no more than life can beyond the period to which it was destined.[2] . . .

If these speculations should be true, then I know not what advantages we can pretend to modern knowledge by any we receive from the ancients: nay it is possible, men may lose rather than gain by them; may lessen the force and growth of their own genius by constraining and forming it upon that of others; may have less knowledge of their own for contenting themselves with that of those before them. So a man that only translates, shall never be a poet, nor a painter that only copies, nor a swimmer

[1] *And the Creator said once to those born whatever they should know.*

[2] One line omitted.

that swims always with bladders. So people that trust wholly to others charity, and without industry of their own, will be always poor.

Besides, who can tell whether learning may not even weaken invention in a man that has great advantages from nature and birth; whether the weight and number of so many other men's thoughts and notions may not suppress his own, or hinder the motion and agitation of them, from which all invention arises; as heaping on wood, or too many sticks, or too close together, suppresses, and sometimes quite extinguishes, a little spark that would otherwise have grown up to a noble flame. The strength of mind, as well as of body, grows more from the warmth of exercise, than of cloaths; nay, too much of this foreign heat rather makes men faint, and their constitutions tender or weaker than they would be without them. Let it come about how it will, if we are dwarfs, we are still so though we stand upon a giant's shoulders; and even so placed, yet we see less than he, if we are naturally shorter sighted, or if we do not look as much about us, or if we are dazzled with the height, which often happens from weakness either of heart or brain.

In the growth and stature of souls, as well as bodies, the common productions are of indifferent sizes, that occasion no gazing, nor no wonder: but, though there are or have been sometimes dwarfs and sometimes giants in the world, yet it does not follow that there must be such in every age, nor in every country: this we can no more conclude, than that there never have been any, because there are none now, at least in the compass of our present knowledge or enquiry. As I believe there may have been giants at some time, and some place or other in the world, or such a stature as may not have been equalled perhaps again in several thousands of years, or in any other parts; so there may be giants in wit and knowledge, of so overgrown a size, as not to be equalled again in many successions of ages, or any compass of place or country. Such, I am sure, Lucretius esteems and describes Epicurus to have been, and to have risen, like a prodigy of invention

and knowledge, such as had not been before, nor was like to be again; and I know not why others of the ancients may not be allowed to have been as great in their kinds, and to have built as high, though upon different schemes or foundations. Because there is a stag's head at Amboyse of a most prodigious size, and a large table at Memorancy cut out of the thickness of a vine-stock, is it necessary that there must be, every age, such a stag in every great forest, or such a vine in every large vineyard; or that the productions of nature, in any kind, must be still alike, or something near it, because nature is still the same? May there not many circumstances concur to one production that do not to any other in one or many ages? In the growth of a tree, there is the native strength of the seed, both from the kind, and from the perfections of its ripening, and from the health and vigour of the plant that bore it: there is the degree of strength and excellence in that vein of earth where it first took root: there is a propriety of soil suited to the kind of tree that grows in it: there is a great favour or disfavour to its growth from accidents of water and of shelter, from the kindness or unkindness of seasons, till it be past the need or the danger of them. All these, and perhaps many others, joined with the propitiousness of climate to that sort of tree, and the length of age it shall stand and grow, may produce an oak, a fig or a plane-tree that shall deserve to be renowned in story, and shall not perhaps be paralleled in other countries or times.

May not the same have happened in the production, growth, and size of wit and genius in the world, or in some parts or ages of it, and from many more circumstances that contributed towards it, than what may concur to the stupendous growth of a tree or animal? May there not have been, in Greece or Italy of old, such prodigies of invention and learning in philosophy, mathematics, physic, oratory, poetry, that none has ever since approached them, as well as there were in painting, statuary, architecture? And yet their unparalleled and inimitable excellencies in these are undisputed. Science and arts have run their circles, and had their

periods in the several parts of the world; they are generally agreed to have held their course from East to West, to have begun in Chaldea and Egypt, to have been transplanted from thence to Greece, from Greece to Rome; to have sunk there, and after many ages, to have revived from those ashes, and to have sprung up again both in Italy and other more western provinces of Europe. When Chaldea and Egypt were learned and civil, Greece and Rome were as rude and barbarous as all Egypt and Syria now are, and have been long. When Greece and Rome were at their heights in arts and sciences, Gaul, Germany, Britain, were as ignorant and barbarous as any parts of Greece or Turkey can be now.

These, and greater changes, are made in the several countries of the world, and courses of time, by the revolutions of empire, the devastations of armies, the cruelties of conquering and the calamities of enslaved nations; by the violent inundations of water in some countries, and the cruel ravages of plagues in others. These sorts of accidents sometimes lay them so waste, that, when they rise again, it is from such low beginnings that they look like new-created regions, or growing out of the original state of mankind, and without any records or remembrances beyond certain short periods of time. Thus that vast continent of Norway is said to have been so wholly desolated by a plague, about eight or nine hundred years ago, that it was for some ages following a very desart, and since all over-grown with wood: and Ireland was so spoiled and wasted by the conquest of the Scutes and Danes, that there hardly remains any story or tradition what that island was, how planted or governed about five hundred years ago. What changes have been made by violent storms and inundations of the sea in the maritime provinces of the Low-Countries, is hard to know, or to believe what is told, nor how ignorant they have left us of all that passed there before a certain and short period of time.

The accounts of many other countries would perhaps as hardly, and as late, have waded out of the depths of time, and gulphs of ignorance, had it not been for the assistances of those two lan-

guages to which we owe all we have of learning or ancient records in the world. For whether we have anything of the old Chaldean, Hebrew, Arabian, that is truly genuine or more ancient than the Augustan age, I am much in doubt; yet it is probable the vast Alexandrian library must have chiefly consisted of books composed in those languages, with the Egyptian, Syrian, and Ethiopic, or at least translated out of them by the care of the Egyptian kings or priests, as the Old Testament was, wherein the Septuagints employed left their names to that famous translation.

It is very true and just, all that is said of the mighty progress that learning and knowledge have made in these western parts of Europe, within these hundred and fifty years; but that does not conclude it must be at a greater height than it had been in other countries, where it was growing much longer periods of time; it argues more how low it was then amongst us, rather than how high it is now.

Upon the fall of the Roman empire, almost all learning was buried in its ruins: the Northern nations that conquered, or rather overwhelmed it by their numbers, were too barbarous to preserve the remains of learning or civility more carefully than they did those of statuary or architecture, which fell before their brutish rage. The Saracens indeed from their conquests of Egypt, Syria, and Greece, carried home great spoils of learning, as well as other riches, and gave the original of all that knowledge which flourished for some time among the Arabians, and has since been copied out of many authors among them, as theirs have been out of those of the countries they had subdued; nor indeed do learning, civility, morality, seem anywhere to have made a greater growth, in so short a time, than in that empire, nor to have flourished more than in the reign of their great Almanzor, under whose victorious ensigns Spain was conquered by the Moors; but the Goths, and all the rest of those Scythian swarms that from beyond the Danube and the Elbe, under so many several names, over-ran all Europe, took very hardly and very late any tincture of the learning and humanity that had flour-

ished in the several regions of it, under the protection and by the example and instructions of the Romans that had so long possessed them: those Northern nations were indeed easier induced to embrace the religion of those they had subdued, and by their devotion gave great authority and revenues, and thereby ease, to the clergy, both secular and regular, through all their conquests. Great numbers of the better sort among the oppressed natives, finding this vein among them, and no other way to be safe and quiet under such rough masters, betook themselves to the profession and assemblies of religious orders and fraternities, and among those only were preserved all the poor remainders of learning in these several countries. But these good men either contented themselves with their devotion, or with the ease of quiet lives, or else employed their thoughts and studies to raise and maintain the esteem and authority of that sacred order, to which they owed the safety and repose, the wealth and honour they enjoyed. And in this they so well succeeded that the conquerors were governed by those they had subdued, the greatest Princes by the meanest Priests, and the victorious Franks and Lombard Kings fell at the feet of the Roman Prelates. Whilst the clergy were busied in these thoughts or studies, the better sort among the laity were wholly turned to arms and to honour, the meaner sort to labour or to spoil; Princes taken up with wars among themselves, or in those of the Holy Land, or between the Popes and Emperors upon disputes of the ecclesiastical and secular powers; learning so little in use among them that few could write or read besides those of the long robes. During this course of time, which lasted many ages in the western parts of Europe, the Greek tongue was wholly lost, and the purity of the Roman to that degree that what remained of it was only a certain jargon rather than Latin, that passed among the Monks and Friars who were at all learned; and among the students of the several universities, which served to carry them to Rome in pursuit of preferments or causes depending there, and little else.

When the Turks took Constantinople, about two hundred years

ago, and soon after possessed themselves of all Greece, the poor natives, fearing the tyranny of those cruel masters, made their escapes in great numbers to the neighbouring parts of Christendom, some by the Austrian territories into Germany, others by the Venetian into Italy and France; several that were learned among these Grecians (and brought many ancient books with them in that language) began to teach it in these countries; first to gain subsistence, and afterwards favour in some Princes' or great men's courts, who began to take a pleasure or pride in countenancing learned men. Thus began the restoration of learning in these parts with that of the Greek tongue; and soon after, Reuchlyn and Erasmus began that of the purer and ancient Latin. After them, Buchanan[3] carried it, I think, to the greatest height of any of the moderns before or since. The Monkish Latin upon his return was laughed out of doors, and remains only in the inns of Germany or Poland; and with the restitution of these two noble languages, and the books remaining of them (which many Princes and Prelates were curious to recover and collect) learning of all sorts began to thrive in these Western regions: and since that time and in the first succeeding century, made perhaps a greater growth than in any other that we know of in such a compass of time, considering into what depths of ignorance it was sunk before.

But why from thence should be concluded, that it has out-grown all that was ancient, I see no reason. If a strong and vigorous man at thirty years old should fall into a consumption, and so draw on till fifty in the extremest weakness and infirmity; after that, should begin to recover health till sixty; so as to be again as strong as men usually are at that age: it might perhaps truly be said in that case, that he had grown more in strength that last ten years than any others of his life, but not that he was grown to more strength and vigour than he had at thirty years old.

But what are the sciences wherein we pretend to excel? I know of no new philosophers that have made entries upon that noble

[3] George Buchanan (1506-1582), the learned Scotchman, noted especially for his "History of Scotland." He wrote altogether in Latin.

stage for fifteen hundred years past, unless Des Cartes and Hobbes should pretend to it; of whom I shall make no critique here, but only say, that, by what appears of learned men's opinions in this age, they have by no means eclipsed the lustre of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, or others of the ancients. For grammar or rhetoric, no man ever disputed it with them; nor for poetry, that I ever heard of, besides the new French author[4] I have mentioned; and against whose opinion there could, I think, never have been given stronger evidence than by his own poems, printed together with that treatise.

There is nothing new in Astronomy to vie with the ancients, unless it be the Copernican system; nor in Physic, unless Harvey's circulation of the blood. But whether either of these be modern discoveries, or derived from old fountains, is disputed; nay, it is so too, whether they are true or no; for, though reason may seem to favour them more than the contrary opinions, yet sense can very hardly allow them; and, to satisfy mankind, both these must concur. But if they are true, yet these two great discoveries have made no change in the conclusions of Astronomy, nor in the practice of Physic; and so have been of little use to the world, though perhaps of much honour to the authors.

What are become of the charms of Music, by which men and beasts, fishes, fowls, and serpents, were so frequently enchanted, and their very natures changed; by which the passions of men were raised to the greatest height and violence, and then as suddenly appeased, so as they might be justly said to be turned into lions or lambs, into wolves or into harts, by the powers and charms of this admirable art? It is agreed by the learned that the science of music, so admired of the ancients, is wholly lost in the world; and that what we have now, is made up out of certain notes that fell into the fancy or observation of a poor frier, in chanting his matins. So as those two divine excellencies of music and poetry

[4] Fontenelle (1657–1757) who published his "Conversations on the Plurality of Worlds," in 1686, and his "Treatise on the Ancients and the Moderns," in 1688, taking the modern side.

are grown, in a manner, to be little more but the one fiddling, and the other rhyming; and are indeed very worthy the ignorance of the frier, and the barbarousness of the Goths, that introduced them among us.

What have we remaining of Magic, by which the Indians, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, were so renowned, and by which effects so wonderful, and to common men so astonishing were produced, as made them have recourse to Spirits, or supernatural Powers, for some account of their strange operations? By Magic, I mean some excelling knowledge of nature, and the various powers and qualities of its several productions, and the application of certain agents to certain patients, which, by force of some peculiar qualities, produce effects very different from what fall under vulgar observation or comprehension. These are by ignorant people called Magic or Conjuring, and such like terms; and an account of them, much about as wise, is given by the common learned, from Sympathies, Antipathies, Idiosyncrasies, Talismans, and some scraps or terms left us by the Egyptians or Grecians, of the ancient magic; but the science seems, with several others, to be wholly lost.

What traces have we left of that admirable science or skill in Architecture, by which such stupendous fabrics have been raised of old, and so many of the wonders of the world been produced, and which are so little approached by our modern atchievements of this sort, that they hardly fall within our imagination? not to mention the walls and palace of Babylon, the pyramids of Egypt, the tomb of Mausolus, or colosse of Rhodes, the temples and palaces of Greece and Rome; what can be more admirable in this kind than the Roman theatres, their aqueducts, and their bridges, among which that of Trajan over the Danube seems to have been the last flight of the ancient architecture? The stupendous effects of this science sufficiently evince at what heights the Mathematics were among the ancients: but if this be not enough, whoever would be satisfied need go no further than the siege of Syracuse, and that mighty defence made against the Roman power, more

by the wonderful science and arts of Archimedes, and almost magical force of his engines, than by all the strength of the city, or number and bravery of the inhabitants.

The greatest invention that I know of, in latter ages, has been that of the loadstone; and consequently the greatest improvement has been made in the art of Navigation: yet there must be allowed to have been something stupendous in the numbers, and in the built of their ships and galleys of old; and the skill of pilots, from the observation of the stars in the more serene climates, may be judged by the navigations so celebrated in story of the Tyrians and Carthaginians, not to mention other nations. However, it is to this we owe the discovery and commerce of so many vast countries, which were very little, if at all, known to the ancients, and the experimental proof of this terrestrial globe, which was before only speculation, but has since been surrounded by the fortune and boldness of several navigators. From this great, though fortuitous invention, and the consequences thereof, it must be allowed that Geography is mightily advanced in these latter ages. The vast continents of China, the East and West Indies, the long extent and coasts of Africa, with the numberless islands belonging to them, have been hereby introduced into our acquaintance, and our maps; and great increases of wealth and luxury, but none of knowledge, brought among us, further than the extent and situation of country, the customs and manners of so many original nations, which we call barbarous; and I am sure have treated them as if we hardly esteemed them to be a part of mankind. I do not doubt, but many great and more noble uses would have been made of such conquests or discoveries, if they had fallen to the share of the Greeks and Romans, in those ages when knowledge and fame were in as great request as endless gains and wealth are among us now; and how much greater discoveries might have been made by such spirits as theirs, is hard to guess. I am sure, ours, though great, yet look very imperfect, as to what the face of this terrestial globe would probably appear, if they had been pursued as far as we might justly have expected from the progresses

of navigation since the use of the compass, which seems to have been long at a stand; how little has been performed of what has been so often and so confidently promised, of a north-west passage to the East of Tartary, and North of China? How little do we know of the lands on that side of the Magellan Straits that lie towards the South pole, which may be vast islands or continents, for aught any can yet aver, though that passage was so long since found out? Whether Japan be island or continent, with some parts of Tartary on the north side, is not certainly agreed. The lands of Yedso upon the north-east continent have been no more than coasted; and whether they may not join to the northern continent of America, is by some doubted.

But the defect or negligence seems yet to have been greater towards the south, where we know little beyond thirty-five degrees, and that only by the necessity of doubling the Cape of Good Hope in our East-India vogages: yet a continent has been long since found out within fifteen degrees to South, and about the length of Java, which is marked by the name of New Holland in the maps, and to what extent none knows, either to the South, the East, or the West; yet the learned have been of opinion, that there must be a balance of earth on that side of the line in some proportion to what there is on the other; and that it cannot be all sea from thirty degrees to the South pole, since we have found land to above sixty-five degrees towards the North. But our navigators that way have been confined to the roads of trade, and our discoveries bounded by what we can manage to a certain degree of gain. And I have heard it said among the Dutch, that their East-India Company have long since forbidden, and under the greatest penalties, any further attempts of discovering that continent, having already more trade in those parts than they can turn to account, and fearing some more populous nation of Europe might make great establishments of trade in some of those unknown regions, which might ruin or impair what they have already in the Indies.

Thus we are lame still in geography itself, which we might have

expected to run up to so much greater perfection by the use of the compass; and it seems to have been little advanced these last hundred years. So far have we been from improving upon those advantages we have received from the knowledge of the ancients, that, since the late restoration of learning and arts among us, our first flights seem to have been the highest, and a sudden damp to have fallen upon our wings, which has hindered us from rising above certain heights. The arts of Painting and Statuary began to revive with learning in Europe, and made a great but short flight; so as, for these last hundred years, we have not had one master in either of them who deserved a rank with those that flourished in that short period after they began among us.

It were too great a mortification to think that the same fate has happened to us, even in our modern learning; as if the growth of that, as well as of natural bodies, had some short periods beyond which it could not reach, and after which it must begin to decay. It falls in one country or one age, and rises again in others, but never beyond a certain pitch. One man, or one country, at a certain time runs a great length in some certain kinds of knowledge, but loses as much ground in others, that were perhaps as useful and as valuable. There is a certain degree of capacity in the greatest vessel, and, when it is full, if you pour in still, it must run out some way or other; and the more it runs out on one side, the less runs out at the other. So the greatest memory, after a certain degree, as it learns or retains more of some things or words, loses and forgets as much of others. The largest and deepest reach of thought, the more it pursues some certain subjects, the more it neglects others.

Besides, few men or none excel in all faculties of mind. A great memory may fail of invention; both may want judgment to digest or apply what they remember or invent. Great courage may want caution; great prudence may want vigour; yet all are necessary to make a great commander. But how can a man hope to excel in all qualities, when some are produced by the heat,

others by the coldness of brain and temper? The abilities of man must fall short on one side or other, like too scanty a blanket when you are a-bed; if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered.

But what would we have, unless it be other natures and beings than God Almighty has given us? The height of our statures may be six or seven feet, and we would have it sixteen; the length of our age may reach to a hundred years, and we would have it a thousand: we are born to grovel upon the earth, and we would fain soar up to the skies. We cannot comprehend the growth of a kernel or seed, the frame of an ant or bee; we are amazed at the wisdom of the one, and industry of the other; and yet we will know the substance, the figure, the courses, the influences, of all those glorious celestial bodies, and the end for which they were made: we pretend to give a clear account how thunder and lightning (that great artillery of God Almighty) is produced, and we cannot comprehend how the voice of a man is framed, that poor little noise we make every time we speak. The motion of the sun is plain and evident to some astronomers, and of the earth to others; yet we none of us know which of them moves, and meet with many seeming impossibilities in both, and beyond the fathom of human reason or comprehension. Nay, we do not so much as know what motion is, nor how a stone moves from our hand, when we throw it cross the street. Of all these that most ancient and divine writer gives the best account in that short satire, "Vain man would fain be wise, when he is born like a wild ass's colt."[5]

But, God be thanked, his pride is greater than his ignorance; and what he wants in knowledge, he supplies by sufficiency. When he has looked about him as far as he can, he concludes there is no more to be seen; when he is at the end of his line, he is at the bottom of the ocean; when he has shot his best, he is sure none ever did nor ever can shoot better or beyond it. His

[5] Job. xi. 12.

own reason is the certain measure of truth, his own knowledge, of what is possible in nature; though his mind and his thoughts change every seven years, as well as his strength and his features; nay, though his opinions change every week or every day, yet he is sure, or at least confident, that his present thoughts and conclusions are just and true, and cannot be deceived; and, among all the miseries to which mankind is born and subjected in the whole course of his life, he has this one felicity to comfort and support him, that, in all ages, in all things, every man is always in the right. A boy at fifteen is wiser than his father at forty, the meanest subject than his Prince or Governors; and the modern scholars, because they have, for a hundred years past, learned their lesson pretty well, are much more knowing than the ancients their masters.

But let it be so, and proved by good reasons, is it so by experience too? Have the studies, the writings, the productions of Gresham college, or the late academies of Paris, outshined or eclipsed the Lycæum of Plato, the academy of Aristotle, the Stoa of Zeno, the garden of Epicurus? Has Harvey outdone Hippocrates; or Wilkins, Archimedes? Are D'Avila's and Strada's histories beyond those of Herodotus and Livy? Are Sleyden's commentaries beyond those of Cæsar? the flights of Boileau above those of Virgil? If all this must be allowed, I will then yield Gondibert to have excelled Homer, as is pretended; and the modern French poetry, all that of the ancients. And yet, I think it may be as reasonably said that the plays in Moorfields are beyond the Olympic games; a Welsh or Irish harp excels those of Orpheus and Arion; the pryamid in London, those of Memphis; and the French conquests in Flanders are greater than those of Alexander and Cæsar, as their operas and panegyrics would make us believe.

But the consideration of poetry ought to be a subject by itself. For the books we have in prose, do any of the modern we converse with appear of such a spirit and force, as if they would live longer than the ancient have done? If our wit and eloquence,

our knowledge or inventions, would deserve it, yet our languages would not: there is no hope of their lasting long, nor of anything in them; they change every hundred years so as to be hardly known for the same, or anything of the former styles to be endured by the latter; so as they can no more last like the ancients, than excellent carvings in wood like those in marble or brass.

The three modern tongues most esteemed are Italian, Spanish, and French, all imperfect dialects of the noble Roman; first mingled and corrupted with the harsh words and terminations of those many different and barbarous nations, by whose invasions and excursions the Roman empire was long infested: they were afterwards made up into these several languages, by long and popular use, out of those ruins and corruptions of Latin, and the prevailing languages of those nations to which these several provinces came in time to be most and longest subjected (as the Goths and Moors in Spain, the Goths and Lombards in Italy, the Franks in Gaul), besides a mingle of those tongues which were original to Gaul and to Spain before the Roman conquests and establishments there. Of these, there may be some remainders in Biscay or the Asturias: but I doubt whether there be any of the old Gallic in France, the subjection there having been more universal, both to the Romans and Franks. But I do not find the mountainous parts on the North of Spain were ever wholly subdued, or formerly governed, either by the Romans, Goths, or Saracens, no more than Wales by Romans, Saxons, or Normans, after their conquests in our island, which has preserved the ancient Biscayan and British more entire than any native tongue of other provinces, where the Roman and Gothic or Northern conquests reached, and were for any time established.

It is easy to imagine how imperfect copies these modern languages, thus composed, must needs be of so excellent an original, being patched up out of the conceptions, as well as sounds, of such barbarous or enslaved people; whereas the Latin was framed or cultivated by the thoughts and uses of the noblest nation that appears upon any record of story, and enriched only by the spoils

of Greece, which alone could pretend to contest it with them. It is obvious enough what rapport there is, and must ever be, between the thoughts and words, the conceptions and languages of every country, and how great a difference this must make in the comparison and excellence of books; and how easy and just a preference it must decree to those of the Greek and Latin before any of the modern languages.

It may perhaps be further affirmed, in favour of the ancients, that the oldest books we have are still in their kind the best. The two most ancient that I know of in prose, among those we call profane authors, are Æsop's Fables and Phalaris's Epistles, both living near the same time, which was that of Cyrus and Pythagoras. As the first has been agreed by all ages since for the greatest master in his kind, and all others of that sort have been but imitations of his original; so I think the Epistles of Phalaris to have more grace, more spirit, more force of wit and genius, than any others I have ever seen, either ancient or modern. I know several learned men (or that usually pass for such under the name of critics) have not esteemed them genuine; and Politian, with some others, have attributed them to Lucian: but I think he must have little skill in painting, that cannot find out this to be an original; such diversity of passions, upon such variety of actions and passages of life and government, such freedom of thought, such boldness of expression, such bounty to his friends, such scorn of his enemies, such honour of learned men, such esteem of good, such knowledge of life, such contempt of death, with such fierceness of nature and cruelty of revenge, could never be represented but by him that possessed them; and I esteem Lucian to have been no more capable of writing, than of acting what Phalaris did. In all one writ, you find the scholar or the sophist; and in all the other, the tyrant and the commander.[6]

[6] This paragraph is all that Temple says about the "Epistles of Phalaris," as to the genuineness of which the celebrated Bentley and Boyle controversy arose soon afterwards.

XIII.

JOHN DRYDEN.

(1631–1700.)

1. *AN ESSAY OF DRAMATIC POESY.*

[Written about 1665, revised 1684.]

Lisideius[1] concluded in this manner; and Neander,[2] after a little pause, thus answered him:

I shall grant Lisideius, without much dispute, a great part of what he has urged against us; for I acknowledge that the French contrive their plots more regularly, and observe the laws of comedy, and decorum of the stage (to speak generally), with more exactness than the English. Farther, I deny not but he has taxed us justly in some irregularities of ours which he has mentioned; yet, after all, I am of opinion, that neither our faults, nor their virtues, are considerable enough to place them above us.

For the lively imitation of nature being in the definition of a play, those which best fulfil that law ought to be esteemed superior to the others. 'Tis true, those beauties of the French poesy are such as will raise perfection higher where it is, but are not sufficient to give it where it is not; they are indeed the beauties of a statue, but not of a man, because not animated with the soul of poesy, which is imitation of humour and passions: and this Lisideius himself, or any other, however biassed to their party, cannot but acknowledge, if he will either compare the humour of our comedies, or the characters of our serious plays, with theirs. He

[1] Sir Charles Sedley, who had exalted the French drama above the English.

[2] Dryden.

who will look upon theirs which have been written till these last ten years, or thereabouts, will find it an hard matter to pick out two or three passable humours amongst them. Corneille himself, their arch-poet, what has he produced except "The Liar"? and you know how it was cried up in France; but when it came upon the English stage, though well translated, and that part of Dorant acted to so much advantage as I am confident it never received in its own country, the most favourable to it would not put it in competition with many of Fletcher's or Ben Jonson's. In the rest of Corneille's comedies you have little humour; he tells you himself, his way is, first to show two lovers in good intelligence with each other; in the working up of the play, to embroil them by some mistake, and in the latter end to clear it, and reconcile them.

But of late years Moliere, the younger Corneille, Quinault, and some others, have been imitating afar off the quick turns and graces of the English stage. They have mixed their serious plays with mirth, like our tragi-comedies, since the death of Cardinal Richelieu, which Lisideius, and many others, not observing, have commended that in them for a virtue, which they themselves no longer practise. Most of their new plays are, like some of ours, derived from the Spanish novels. There is scarce one of them without a veil, and a trusty Diego, who drolls much after the rate of the "Adventures."[3] But their humours, if I may grace them with that name, are so thin sown, that never above one of them comes up in any play. I dare take upon me to find more variety of them in some one play of Ben Jonson's, than in all theirs together: as he who has seen the "Alchemist," "The Silent Woman," or "Bartholomew Fair," cannot but acknowledge with me.

I grant the French have performed what was possible on the ground-work of the Spanish plays; what was pleasant before, they have made regular: but there is not above one good play to be writ on all those plots; they are too much alike to please often,

[3] "'The Adventures of Five Hours,' a comedy imitated from the Spanish of Calderon, by Sir Samuel Tuke, with some assistance from the Earl of Bristol." — SCOTT.

which we need not the experience of our own stage to justify. As for their new way of mingling mirth with serious plot, I do not, with Lisideius, condemn the thing, though I cannot approve their manner of doing it. He tells us, we cannot so speedily recollect ourselves after a scene of great passion and concernment, as to pass to another of mirth and humour, and to enjoy it with any relish: but why should he imagine the soul of man more heavy than his senses? Does not the eye pass from an unpleasant object to a pleasant, in a much shorter time than is required to this? and does not the unpleasantness of the first commend the beauty of the latter? The old rule of logic might have convinced him that contraries, when placed near, set off each other. A continued gravity keeps the spirit too much bent; we must refresh it sometimes, as we bait in a journey, that we may go on with greater ease. A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our music has betwixt the acts; which we find a relief to us from the best plots and language of the stage, if the discourses have been long. I must therefore have stronger arguments ere I am convinced that compassion and mirth in the same subject destroy each other; and in the mean time, cannot but conclude, to the honour of our nation, that we have invented, increased, and perfected, a more pleasant way of writing for the stage, than was ever known to the ancients or moderns of any nation, which is tragi-comedy.

And this leads me to wonder why Lisideius and many others should cry up the barrenness of the French plots above the variety and copiousness of the English. Their plots are single; they carry on one design, which is pushed forward by all the actors, every scene in the play contributing and moving towards it. Our plays, besides the main design, have under-plots, or by-concernments, of less considerable persons and intrigues, which are carried on with the motion of the main plot: as they say the orb of the fixed stars, and those of the planets, though they have motions of their own, are whirled about by the motion of the *primum mobile*[4] in

[4] The sphere in which the planets were conceived to be set.

which they are contained. That similitude expresses much of the English stage; for if contrary motions may be found in nature to agree; if a planet can go east and west at the same time; — one way by virtue of his own motion, the other by the force of the first mover; — it will not be difficult to imagine how the under-plot, which is only different, not contrary to the great design, may naturally be conducted along with it. Eugenius[5] has already shewn us, from the confession of the French poets, that the unity of action is sufficiently preserved, if all the imperfect actions of the play are conducting to the main design; but when those petty intrigues of a play are so ill-ordered that they have no coherence with the other, I must grant that Lisideius has reason to tax that want of due connexion; for co-ordination in a play is as dangerous and unnatural as in a state. In the mean time he must acknowledge, our variety, if well ordered, will afford a greater pleasure to the audience.

As for his other argument, that by pursuing one single theme, they gain an advantage to express and work up the passions, I wish any example he can bring from them would make it good; for I confess their verses are to me the coldest I have ever read. Neither, indeed, is it possible for them, in the way they take, so to express passion, as that the effects of it should appear in the concernment of an audience, their speeches being so many declamations, which tire us with the length; so that, instead of persuading us to grieve for their imaginary heroes, we are concerned for our own trouble, as we are in tedious visits of bad company; we are in pain till they are gone. When the French stage came to be reformed by Cardinal Richelieu, those long harangues were introduced, to comply with the gravity of a churchman. Look upon the "Cinna" and the "Pompey"; they are not so properly to be called plays, as long discourses of reasons of state; and "Polieucte" in matters of religion is as solemn as the long stops upon our organs. Since that time it is grown into a custom, and

[5] Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset.

their actors speak by the hour-glass, like our parsons;[6] nay, they account it the grace of their parts, and think themselves disparaged by the poet, if they may not twice or thrice in a play entertain the audience with a speech of an hundred lines. I deny not but this may suit well enough with the French; for as we, who are a more sullen people, come to be diverted at our plays, so they, who are of an airy and gay temper, come thither to make themselves more serious: and this I conceive to be one reason why comedies are more pleasing to us, and tragedies to them. But to speak generally: It cannot be denied that short speeches and replies are more apt to move the passions, and beget concernment in us, than the other; for it is unnatural for any one, in a gust of passion, to speak long together; or for another, in the same condition, to suffer him without interruption. Grief and passion are like floods raised in little brooks by a sudden rain; they are quickly up, and if the concernment be poured unexpectedly in upon us, it overflows us: But a long sober shower gives them leisure to run out as they came in, without troubling the ordinary current. As for comedy, repartee is one of its chiefest graces; the greatest pleasure of the audience is a chase of wit, kept up on both sides, and swiftly managed. And this our forefathers, if not we, have had in Fletcher's plays to a much higher degree of perfection than the French poets can reasonably hope to reach.

There is another part of Lisideius's discourse, in which he has rather excused our neighbours, than commended them; that is, for aiming only to make one person considerable in their plays. It is very true what he has urged, that one character in all plays, even without the poet's care, will have advantage of all the others; and that the design of the whole drama will chiefly depend on it. But this hinders not that there may be more shining characters in the play: many persons of a second magnitude, nay, some so

[6] "The custom of placing an hour-glass before the clergyman was then common in England. It is still the furniture of a country pulpit in Scotland." — SCOTT.

very near, so almost equal to the first, that greatness may be opposed to greatness, and all the persons be made considerable, not only by their quality, but their action. It is evident, that the more the persons are, the greater will be the variety of the plot. If then the parts are managed so regularly that the beauty of the whole be kept entire, and that the variety become not a perplexed and confused mass of accidents, you will find it infinitely more pleasing to be led in a labyrinth of design, where you see some of your way before you, yet discern not the end till you arrive at it. And that all this is practicable, I can produce for examples many of our English plays; as "The Maid's Tragedy," "The Alchemist," "The Silent Woman": I was going to have named "The Fox," but that the unity of design seems not exactly observed in it; for there appear two actions in the play; the first naturally ending with the fourth act, the second forced from it in the fifth: which yet is the less to be condemned in him, because the disguise of Volpone, though it suited not with his character as a crafty or covetous person, agreed well enough with that of a voluptuary; and by it the poet gained the end at which he aimed, the punishment of vice, and the reward of virtue, both which that disguise produced. So that to judge equally of it, it was an excellent fifth act, but not so naturally proceeding from the former.

But to leave this, and pass to the latter part of Lisideius's discourse, which concerns relations, I must acknowledge with him, that the French have reasons to hide that part of the action which would occasion too much tumult on the stage, and to chuse rather to have it made known by narration to the audience. Farther, I think it very convenient, for the reasons he has given, that all incredible actions were removed; but, whether custom has so insinuated itself into our countrymen, or nature has so formed them to fierceness, I know not; but they will scarcely suffer combats and other objects of horror to be taken from them. And indeed, the indecency of tumults is all which can be objected against fighting: for why may not our imagination as well suffer itself to be

deluded with the probability of it, as with any other thing in the play? For my part, I can with as great ease persuade myself that the blows are given in good earnest, as I can that they who strike them are kings or princes, or those persons which they represent. For objects of incredibility, — I would be satisfied from Lisideius, whether we have any so removed from all appearance of truth, as are those of Corneille's "Andromède"; a play which has been frequented the most of any he has writ. If the Perseus, or the son of an heathen god, the Pegasus, and the Monster, were not capable to choke a strong belief, let him blame any representation of ours hereafter. Those indeed were objects of delight, yet the reason is the same as to the probability; for he makes it not a ballet, or masque, but a play, which is to resemble truth. But for death, that it ought not to be represented, I have, besides the arguments alleged by Lisideius, the authority of Ben Jonson, who has forborne it in his tragedies: for both the death of Sejanus and Catiline are related; though, in the latter, I cannot but observe one irregularity of that great poet; he has removed the scene in the same act from Rome to Catiline's army, and from thence again to Rome; and besides, has allowed a very considerable time after Catiline's speech for the striking of the battle, and the return of Petreius, who is to relate the event of it to the senate; which I should not animadvert on him, who was otherwise a painful observer of τὸ πρέπον, or the *decorum* of the stage, if he had not used extreme severity in his judgment on the incomparable Shakespeare for the same fault.[7] To conclude on this subject of relations, if we are to be blamed for shewing too much of the action, the French are as faulty for discovering too little of it; a mean betwixt both should be observed by every judicious writer, so as the audience may neither be left unsatisfied by not seeing what is beautiful, or shocked by beholding what is either incredible or indecent.

I hope I have already proved in this discourse, that though we are not altogether so punctual as the French in observing the laws

[7] SCOTT refers to Jonson's Prologue to "Every Man in his Humour."

of comedy, yet our errors are so few, and little, and those things wherein we excel them so considerable, that we ought of right to be preferred before them. But what will Lisideius say, if they themselves acknowledge they are too strictly bounded by those laws, for breaking which he has blamed the English? I will allege Corneille's words, as I find them in the end of his Discourse of the Three Unities: *Il est facile aux speculatifs d' estre severes*, &c. "It is easy for speculative persons to judge severely; but if they would produce to public view ten or twelve pieces of this nature, they would perhaps give more latitude to the rules than I have done, when, by experience, they had known how much we are limited and constrained by them, and how many beauties of the stage they banished from it." To illustrate a little what he has said: — by their servile observations of the unities of time and place, and integrity of scenes, they have brought on themselves that dearth of plot, and narrowness of imagination which may be observed in all their plays. How many beautiful accidents might naturally happen in two or three days, which cannot arrive[8] with any probability in the compass of twenty-four hours? There is time to be allowed also for maturity of design, which amongst great and prudent persons, such as are often represented in tragedy, cannot, with any likelihood of truth, be brought to pass at so short a warning. Farther, by tying themselves strictly to the unity of place, and unbroken scenes, they are forced many times to omit some beauties which cannot be shewn where the act began; but might, if the scene were interrupted, and the stage cleared for the persons to enter in another place; and therefore the French poets are often forced upon absurdities: for if the act begins in a chamber, all the persons in the play must have some business or other to come thither, or else they are not to be shewn that act; and sometimes their characters are very unfitting to appear there: as suppose it were the king's bed-chamber, yet the meanest man in the tragedy must come and dispatch his business there, rather than in the lobby, or court-yard (which is fitter for him), for fear

[8] happen; imitation of French usage.

the stage should be cleared, and the scenes broken. Many times they fall by it into a greater inconvenience; for they keep their scenes unbroken, and yet change the place; as in one of their newest plays, where the act begins in the street. There a gentleman is to meet his friend; he sees him with his man coming out from his father's house; they talk together, and the first goes out: the second, who is a lover, has made an appointment with his mistress; she appears at the window, and then we are to imagine the scene lies under it. This gentleman is called away, and leaves his servant with his mistress: presently her father is heard from within; the young lady is afraid the serving-man should be discovered, and thrusts him into a place of safety, which is supposed to be her closet. After this, the father enters to the daughter, and now the scene is in a house: for he is seeking from one room to another for this poor Philipin, or French Diego, who is heard from within, drolling and breaking many a miserable conceit on the subject of his sad condition. In this ridiculous manner the play goes forward, the stage being never empty the while: so that the street, the window, the two houses, and the closet, are made to walk about, and the persons to stand still. Now, what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher, or of Shakespeare?

If they content themselves, as Corneille did, with some flat design, which, like an ill riddle, is found out ere it be half proposed, such plots we can make every way regular as easily as they; but whenever they endeavour to rise to any quick turns and counter-turns of plot, as some of them have attempted, since Corneille's plays have been less in vogue, you see they write as irregularly as we, though they cover it more speciously. Hence the reason is perspicuous why no French plays, when translated, have,[9] or ever can succeed on the English stage. For, if you consider the plots, our own are fuller of variety; if the writing, ours are more quick and fuller of spirit; and therefore 'tis a

[9] Common modern blunder of omitting past participle with auxiliary.

strange mistake in those who decry the way of writing plays in verse, as if the English therein imitated the French. We have borrowed nothing from them; our plots are weaved in English looms: we endeavour therein to follow the variety and greatness of characters, which are derived to us from Shakespeare and Fletcher; the copiousness and well-knitting of the intrigues we have from Jonson; and for the verse itself we have English precedents of elder date than any of Corneille's plays. Not to name our old comedies before Shakespeare, which were all writ in verse of six feet, or Alexandrines, such as the French now use,[10] I can shew in Shakespeare, many scenes of rhyme together, and the like in Ben Jonson's tragedies: in "Catiline" and "Sejanus" sometimes thirty or forty lines, — I mean besides the chorus, or the monologues; which, by the way, shewed Ben no enemy to this way of writing, especially if you read his "Sad Shepherd," which goes sometimes on rhyme, sometimes on blank verse, like an horse who eases himself on trot and amble. You find him likewise commending Fletcher's pastoral of "The Faithful Shepherdess," which is for the most part rhyme, though not refined to that purity to which it hath since been brought. And these examples are enough to clear us from a servile imitation of the French.

But to return whence I have digressed: I dare boldly affirm these two things of the English drama; — First, that we have many plays of ours as regular as any of theirs, and which, besides, have more variety of plot and characters; and, secondly, that in most of the irregular plays of Shakespeare or Fletcher (for Ben Jonson's are for the most part regular), there is a more masculine fancy, and greater spirit in the writing than there is in any of the French. I could produce, even in Shakespeare's and Fletcher's works, some plays which are almost exactly formed; as the "Merry Wives of Windsor," and "The Scornful Lady": but, because (generally speaking) Shakespeare, who writ first, did not

[10] "Mr. Malone remarks that the assertion in the text is too general," — (SCOTT), which is a very just remark, for all the older plays were not written in Alexandrines. *Cf.* ARNOLD'S note.

perfectly observe the laws of comedy, and Fletcher, who came nearer to perfection, yet through carelessness made many faults; I will take the pattern of a perfect play from Ben Jonson, who was a careful and learned observer of the dramatic laws, and from all his comedies I shall select "The Silent Woman," of which I will make a short examen, according to those rules which the French observe.

As Neander was beginning to examine "The Silent Woman," Eugenius, earnestly regarding him; I beseech you, Neander, said he, gratify the company, and me in particular, so far as, before you speak of the play, to give us a character of the author; and tell us frankly your opinion, whether you do not think all writers, both French and English, ought to give place to him?

I fear, replied Neander, that, in obeying your commands, I shall draw some envy on myself. Besides, in performing them, it will be first necessary to speak somewhat of Shakespeare and Fletcher, his rivals in poesy; and one of them, in my opinion, at least his equal, perhaps his superior.[11]

To begin then with Shakespeare. He was the man who of all modern, and perhaps ancient poets, had the largest and most comprehensive soul. All the images of nature were still present to him, and he drew them not laboriously, but luckily: when he describes anything, you more than see it, you feel it too. Those who accuse him to have wanted learning, give him the greater commendation: he was naturally learned; he needed not the spectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot say he is everywhere alike; were he so, I should do him injury to compare him with the greatest of mankind. He is many times flat, insipid; his comic wit degenerating into clenches,[12] his serious swelling into bombast. But he is always great, when some great occasion is presented to him: no man can say, he ever had a fit subject for his wit, and did not then raise himself as high above the rest of poets,

[11] "Mr. Malone justly observes that the caution observed in this decision proves the miserable taste of the age." — SCOTT.

[12] puns.

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi.[13]

The consideration of this made Mr. Hales of Eton say, that there was no subject of which any poet ever writ, but he would produce it much better done in Shakespeare; and however others are now generally preferred before him, yet the age wherein he lived, which had contemporaries with him, Fletcher and Jonson, never equalled them to him in their esteem: and in the last king's court, when Ben's reputation was at highest, Sir John Suckling, and with him the greater part of the courtiers, set our Shakespeare far above him.

Beaumont and Fletcher, of whom I am next to speak, had, with the advantage of Shakespeare's wit, which was their precedent, great natural gifts improved by study; Beaumont especially being so accurate a judge of plays that Ben Jonson, while he lived, submitted all his writings to his censure, and 'tis thought, used his judgment in correcting, if not contriving, all his plots. What value he had for him, appears by the verses he writ to him; and therefore I need speak no farther of it. The first play that brought Fletcher and him in esteem, was their "Philaster"; for before that, they had written two or three very unsuccessfully: as the like is reported of Ben Jonson before he writ "Every Man in his Humour." Their plots were generally more regular than Shakespeare's, especially those which were made before Beaumont's death; and they understood and imitated the conversation of gentlemen much better; whose wild debaucheries, and quickness of wit in repartees, no poet before them could paint as they have done. Humour,[14] which Ben Jonson derived from particular persons, they made it not their business to describe: they represented all the passions very lively, but above all, love. I am apt to believe the English language in them arrived to its highest perfection; what words have since been taken in, are rather superfluous than ornamental. Their plays are now the most

[13] *As the cypresses are among the pliant shrubs.* — VIRGIL, *Eclogues*, I. 26.

[14] "*Humour*, in the ancient dramatic language, signified some peculiar or fantastic bias, or habit of mind, in an individual." — SCOTT.

pleasant and frequent entertainments of the stage; two of theirs being acted through the year for one of Shakespeare's or Jonson's: the reason is, because there is a certain gaiety in their comedies, and pathos in their more serious plays, which suits generally with all men's humours. Shakespeare's language is likewise a little obsolete, and Ben Jonson's wit comes short of theirs.

As for Jonson, to whose character I am now arrived, if we look upon him while he was himself (for his last plays were but his dotages), I think him the most learned and judicious writer which any theatre ever had. He was a most severe judge of himself, as well as others. One cannot say he wanted wit, but rather that he was frugal of it. In his works you find little to retrench or alter. Wit and language, and humour also in some measure, we had before him; but something of art was wanting to the drama till he came. He managed his strength to more advantage than any who preceded him. You seldom find him making love in any of his scenes, or endeavouring to move the passions; his genius was too sullen and saturnine to do it gracefully, especially when he knew he came after those who had performed both to such an height. Humour was his proper sphere; and in that he delighted most to represent mechanic people. He was deeply conversant in the ancients, both Greek and Latin, and he borrowed boldly from them: there is scarce a poet or historian among the Roman authors of those times, whom he has not translated in "Sejanus" and "Catiline." But he has done his robberies so openly, that one may see he fears not to be taxed by any law. He invades authors like a monarch; and what would be theft in other poets, is only victory in him. With the spoils of these writers he so represents old Rome to us, in its rights, ceremonies, and customs, that if one of their poets had written either of his tragedies, we had seen less of it than in him. If there was any fault in his language, it was that he weaved it too closely and laboriously, in his comedies especially: perhaps too, he did a little too much Romanize our tongue, leaving the words which he translated almost as much Latin as he found them: wherein, though he

learnedly followed their language, he did not enough comply with the idiom of ours. If I would compare him with Shakespeare, I must acknowledge him the more correct poet, but Shakespeare the greater wit.[15] Shakespeare was the Homer, or father of our dramatic poets; Jonson was the Virgil, the pattern of elaborate writing: I admire him, but I love Shakespeare. To conclude of him; as he has given us the most correct plays, so in the precepts which he has laid down in his "Discoveries,"[16] we have as many and profitable rules for perfecting the stage, as any wherewith the French can furnish us.

Having thus spoken of the author, I proceed to the examination of his comedy, "The Silent Woman."

[15] "Dryden here understands *wit* in the enlarged sense of invention or genius." — SCOTT.

[16] Mr. Thomas Arnold, who has just published in the Clarendon Press Series a useful edition of this Essay of Dryden's, says, in a note on the "Discoveries": "The praise which Dryden gives to the book is excessive." I cannot think so, and in confirmation of this view, I would refer to an excellent article on the "Discoveries," by the poet Swinburne, in the *Fortnightly Review* for July, 1888, and to his "Study of Ben Jonson." Mr. Saintsbury also shows a high appreciation of Jonson's prose style, in his "History of Elizabethan Literature" (pp. 218–220).

XIII.

2. *DEFENCE OF THE EPILOGUE, OR AN ESSAY ON THE DRAMATIC POETRY OF THE LAST AGE.*

[Written about 1670.]

The promises of authors, that they will write again, are, in effect, a threatening of their readers with some new impertinence; and they, who perform not what they promise, will have their pardon on easy terms. It is from this consideration, that I could be glad to spare you the trouble, which I am now giving you, of a postscript, if I were not obliged, by many reasons, to write somewhat concerning our present plays, and those of our predecessors on the English stage. The truth is, I have so far engaged myself in a bold epilogue to this play, wherein I have somewhat taxed the former writing, that it was necessary for me either not to print it, or to shew that I could defend it. Yet I would so maintain my opinion of the present age, as not to be wanting in my veneration for the past: I would ascribe to dead authors their just praises in those things wherein they have excelled us; and in those wherein we contend with them for the pre-eminence, I would acknowledge our advantages to the age, and claim no victory from our wit. This being what I have proposed to myself, I hope I shall not be thought arrogant when I inquire into their errors; for we live in an age so sceptical that, as it determines little, so it takes nothing from antiquity on trust; and I profess to have no other ambition in this essay than that poetry may not go backward, when all other arts and sciences are advancing. Whoever censures me for this inquiry, let him hear his character from Horace:

Ingeniis non ille favet, plauditque sepultis,
Nostra sed impugnat; nos nostraque lividus odit,[17]

He favours not dead wits but hates the living.

It was upbraided to that excellent poet, that he was an enemy to the writings of his predecessor Lucilius, because he said, *Lucilium lutulentum fluere*,[18] that he ran muddy; and that he ought to have retrenched from his satires many unnecessary verses. But Horace makes Lucilius himself to justify him from the imputation of envy, by telling you that he would have done the same, had he lived in an age which was more refined:

Si foret hoc nostrum fato delapsus [*dilatus*] *in ævum,*
Detereret sibi multa, recideret omne quod ultra
Perfectum traheretur,[19] &c.

And, both in the whole course of that satire, and in his most admirable Epistle to Augustus, he makes it his business to prove that antiquity alone is no plea for the excellency of a poem; but that, one age learning from another, the last (if we can suppose an equality of wit in the writers), has the advantage of knowing more and better than the former. And this, I think, is the state of the question in dispute. It is therefore my part to make it clear that the language, wit, and conversation of our age, are improved and refined above the last; and then it will not be difficult to infer that our plays have received some part of those advantages.

In the first place, therefore, it will be necessary to state in general, what this refinement is, of which we treat; and that, I think, will not be defined amiss, "An improvement of our Wit, Language, and Conversation: or, an alteration in them for the better."

To begin with Language. That an alteration is lately made in

[17] *He does not favor and applaud buried wits, but attacks our own; envious, he hates us and our wits.* — HORACE, *Epistles*, II. 1. 88–89.

[18] HORACE, *Satires*, I. 4. 11, and I. 10. 58.

[19] *If he had been brought down by fate to this age of ours, he would erase much from his works, he would cut out everything that was carried beyond completion.* — HORACE, *Satires*, I. 10. 76–78.

ours, or since the writers of the last age (in which I comprehend Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson), is manifest. Any man who reads those excellent poets, and compares their language with what is now written, will see it almost in every line; but that this is an improvement of the language, or an alteration for the better, will not so easily be granted. For many are of a contrary opinion, that the English tongue was then in the height of its perfection; that from Jonson's time to ours it has been in a continual declination, like that of the Romans from the age of Virgil to Statius, and so downward to Claudian; of which, not only Petronius, but Quintilian himself so much complains, under the person of *Secundus*, in his famous dialogue, *De Causis corruptæ Eloquentiæ*.[20]

But, to show that our language is improved and that those people have not a just value for the age in which they live, let us consider in what the refinement of a language principally consists; that is, "either in rejecting such old words, or phrases, which are ill sounding, or improper; or in admitting new, which are more proper, more sounding, and more significant."

The reader will easily take notice, that when I speak of rejecting improper words and phrases, I mention not such as are antiquated by custom only, and, as I may say, without any fault of theirs. For in this case the refinement can but be accidental; that is, when the words and phrases, which are rejected, happen to be improper. Neither would I be understood, when I speak of impropriety of language, either wholly to accuse the last age, or to excuse the present, and least of all myself; for all writers have their imperfections and failings; but I may safely conclude in the general, that our improprieties are less frequent, and less gross than theirs. One testimony of this is undeniable, that we are the first who have observed them; and, certainly, to observe errors is a great step to the correcting of them. But, malice and partiality set apart, let any man who understands English, read diligently the works of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and I dare undertake that he will find in every page either some solecism of speech, or some

[20] *On the causes of the corruption of Eloquence.*

notorious flaw in sense; and yet these men are reverenced, when we are not forgiven. That their wit is great, and many times their expressions noble, envy itself cannot deny.

Neque ego illis detrahere ausim
Hærentem capiti multâ cum laude coronam.[21]

But the times were ignorant in which they lived. Poetry was then, if not in its infancy among us, at least not arrived to its vigour and maturity. Witness the lameness of their plots; many of which, especially those which they writ first (for even that age refined itself in some measure), were made up of some ridiculous incoherent story, which in one play many times took up the business of an age. I suppose I need not name "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," nor the historical plays of Shakespeare; besides many of the rest, as the "Winter's Tale," "Love's Labour Lost," "Measure for Measure," which were either grounded on impossibilities, or at least so meanly written, that the comedy neither caused your mirth, nor the serious part your concernment. If I would expatiate on this subject, I could easily demonstrate that our admired Fletcher, who wrote after him, neither understood correct plotting, nor that which they call "the decorum of the stage." I would not search in his worst plays for examples. He who will consider his "Philaster," his "Humorous Lieutenant," his "Faithful Shepherdess," and many others which I could name, will find them much below the applause which is now given them. He will see Philaster wounding his mistress, and afterwards his boy, to save himself; not to mention the Clown, who enters immediately, and not only has the advantage of the combat against the hero, but diverts you from your serious concernment, with his ridiculous and absurd raillery. In his "Humorous Lieutenant," you find his Demetrius and Leontius staying in the midst of a routed army, to hear the cold mirth of the Lieutenant; and Demetrius afterwards appear-

[21] *Nor may I dare to take away from them a crown placed on their brows with great praise.* — HORACE, *Satires*, I. 10. 56–57. Read *cum multâ* for *multâ cum*.

ing with a pistol in his hand, in the next age to Alexander the Great.[22] And for his Shepherd, he falls twice into the former indecency of wounding women. But these absurdities, which those poets committed, may more properly be called the age's fault than theirs. For, besides the want of education and learning (which was their particular unhappiness), they wanted the benefit of converse: But of that I shall speak hereafter, in a place more proper for it. Their audiences knew no better, and therefore were satisfied with what they brought. Those who call theirs the golden age of poetry, have only this reason for it, that they were then content with acorns before they knew the use of bread; or that Ἅλις δρυὸς [23] was become a proverb. They had many who admired them, and few who blamed them; and certainly a severe critic is the greatest help to a good wit: he does the office of a friend, while he designs that of an enemy; and his malice keeps a poet within those bounds, which the luxuriancy of his fancy would tempt him to overleap.

But it is not their plots which I meant principally to tax; I was speaking of their sense and language; and I dare almost challenge any man to shew me a page together which is correct in both. As for Ben Jonson, I am loth to name him, because he is a most judicious writer; yet he very often falls into these errors; and I once more beg the reader's pardon for accusing him of them. Only let him consider that I live in an age where my least faults are severely censured; and that I have no way left to extenuate my failings, but by shewing as great in those whom we admire:

Cædimus, inque vicem præbemus crura sagittis.[24]

I cast my eyes but by chance on "Catiline"; and in the three or four last pages, found enough to conclude that Jonson writ not correctly.

[22] "In these criticisms we see the effects of the refinement which our stage had now borrowed from the French." — SCOTT.

[23] *Enough of the oak.*

[24] *We strike, and in turn we present our limbs to strokes.* — PERSIUS, *Satires*, IV. 42.

"Let the long-hid seeds
Of treason, in thee, now shoot forth in deeds
Ranker than horror."

In reading some bombastic speeches of Macbeth, which are not to be understood, he used to say that it was horror; and I am much afraid that this is so.

"Thy parricide late on thy only son,
After his mother, to make empty way
For thy last wicked nuptials, worse than they
That blaze that act of thy incestuous life,
Which gain'd thee at once a daughter and a wife."

The sense is here extremely perplexed; and I doubt the word *they* is false grammar.

"And be free
Not heaven itself from thy impiety."

A synchysis,[25] or ill-placing of words, of which Tully so much complains in oratory.

"The waves and dens of beasts could not receive
The bodies that those souls were frighted *from*."

The preposition in the end of the sentence; a common fault with him, and which I have but lately observed in my own writings.

"What all the several ills that visit earth,
Plague, famine, fire, could not reach *unto*,
The sword, nor surfeits, let thy fury do."

Here are both the former faults; for, besides that the preposition *unto* is placed last in the verse, and at the half period, and is redundant, there is the former synchysis in the words "the sword, nor surfeits," which in construction ought to have been placed before the other.

Catiline says of Cethegus, that for his sake he would

"*Go on upon* the gods, kiss lightning, wrest
The engine from the Cyclops, and *give fire*
At face of a full cloud, and stand *his ire*."

[25] confusion.

To "go on upon," is only to go on twice. To "give fire at face of a full cloud," was not understood in his own time; "and stand *his ire*," besides the antiquated word *ire*, there is the article *his*, which makes false construction: and giving fire at the face of a cloud, is a perfect image of shooting, however it came to be known in those days to Catiline.

> "Others there are,
> Whom envy to the state draws and pulls on,
> For contumelies received; and such are sure *ones*."

Ones, in the plural number: but that is frequent with him; for he says, not long after,

> "Cæsar and Crassus, if they be ill men,
> Are mighty *ones*.
> Such men, *they* do not succour more the cause, &c."

They redundant.

> "Though heaven should speak with all *his* wrath at once,
> We should stand upright and *unfear'd*."

His is ill syntax with heaven; and by *unfeared* he means *unafraid*: Words of a quite contrary signification.

"The ports are open." He perpetually uses ports for gates; which is an affected error in him, to introduce Latin by the loss of the English idiom; as, in the translation of Tully's speeches, he usually does.

Well-placing of words, for the sweetness of pronunciation, was not known till Mr. Waller introduced it; and, therefore, it is not to be wondered if Ben Jonson has many such lines as these: —

> "But being bred up in his father's needy fortunes; brought up in's sister's prostitution," &c.

But meanness of expression one would think not to be his error in a tragedy, which ought to be more high and sounding than any other kind of poetry; and yet amongst others, in "Catiline," I find these four lines together: —

"So Asia, thou art cruelly even
With us, for all the blows thee given;
When we, whose virtues conquered thee,
Thus by thy vices ruin'd be."

Be there is false English for *are;* though the rhyme hides it.

But I am willing to close the book, partly out of veneration to the author, partly out of weariness to pursue an argument which is so fruitful in so small a compass. And what correctness, after this, can be expected from Shakespeare, or from Fletcher, who wanted that learning and care which Jonson had? I will, therefore, spare my own trouble of inquiring into their faults; who, had they lived now, had doubtless written more correctly. I suppose it will be enough for me to affirm (as I think I safely may), that these, and the like errors, which I taxed in the most correct of the last age are such into which we do not ordinarily fall. I think few of our present writers would have left behind them such a line as this: —

"Contain your spirit in more stricter bounds."

But that gross way of two comparatives was then ordinary; and, therefore, more pardonable in Jonson.

As for the other part of refining, which consists in receiving new words and phrases, I shall not insist much on it. It is obvious that we have admitted many, some of which we wanted, and therefore our language is the richer for them, as it would be by importation of bullion: Others are rather ornamental than necessary; yet, by their admission, the language is become more courtly, and our thoughts are better drest. These are to be found scattered in the writings of our age, and it is not my business to collect them. They who have lately written with most care, have, I believe, taken the rule of Horace for their guide; that is, not to be too hasty in receiving of words, but rather stay till custom has made them familiar to us.

Quem penes arbitrium est, et jus, et norma loquendi.[26]

[26] *In whose power is the control and law and rule of speech.* — HORACE, *Ars Poetica*, 72.

For I cannot approve of their way of refining, who corrupt our English idiom by mixing it too much with French: That is a sophistication of language, not an improvement of it; a turning English into French, rather than a refining of English by French. We meet daily with those fops, who value themselves on their travelling, and pretend they cannot express their meaning in English, because they would put off to us some French phrase of the last edition; without considering that, for aught they know, we have a better of our own. But these are not the men who are to refine us; their talent is to prescribe fashions, not words: at best, they are only serviceable to a writer, so as Ennius was to Virgil. He may *aurum ex stercore colligere:*[27] For it is hard if, amongst many insignificant phrases, there happen not something worth preserving; though they themselves, like Indians, know not the value of their own commodity.

There is yet another way of improving language, which poets especially have practised in all ages; that is, by applying received words to a new signification; and this, I believe, is meant by Horace, in that precept which is so variously construed by expositors:

> *Dixeris egregie, notum si callida verbum*
> *Reddiderit junctura novum.*[28]

And, in this way, he himself had a particular happiness; using all the tropes, and particular metaphors, with that grace which is observable in his Odes, where the beauty of expression is often greater than that of thought; as, in that one example, amongst an infinite number of others, "*Et vultus nimium lubricus aspici.*"[29]

And therefore, though he innovated a little, he may justly be called a great refiner of the Roman tongue. This choice of words, and heightening of their natural signification, was observed

[27] *collect gold from refuse.*

[28] *You will have spoken well, if a skilful conjunction has made a known word new.* — HORACE, *Ars Poetica*, 47–48.

[29] *And a countenance too dangerous* [lit. slippery] *to look at.* — HORACE, *Odes*, I. 19. 8.

in him by the writers of the following ages; for Petronius says of him, "*Et Horatii curiosa felicitas.*"[30] By this graffing, as I may call it, on old words, has our tongue been beautified by the three before-mentioned poets, Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson, whose excellencies I can never enough admire; and in this they have been followed, especially by Sir John Suckling and Mr. Waller, who refined upon them. Neither have they who succeeded them been wanting in their endeavours to adorn our mother tongue: But it is not so lawful for me to praise my living contemporaries, as to admire my dead predecessors.

I should now speak of the refinement of Wit; but I have been so large on the former subject, that I am forced to contract myself in this. I will therefore only observe to you that the wit of the last age was yet more incorrect than their language. Shakespeare, who many times has written better than any poet in any language, is yet so far from writing wit always, or expressing that wit according to the dignity of the subject, that he writes, in many places, below the dullest writers of ours, or any precedent age. Never did any author precipitate himself from such height of thought to so low expressions, as he often does. He is the very Janus of poets; he wears almost everywhere two faces; and you have scarce begun to admire the one, ere you despise the other. Neither is the luxuriance of Fletcher, which his friends have taxed in him, a less fault than the carelessness of Shakespeare. He does not well always; and, when he does, he is a true Englishman — he knows not when to give over. If he wakes in one scene, he commonly slumbers in another: and, if he pleases you in the first three acts, he is frequently so tired with his labour that he goes heavily in the fourth, and sinks under his burden in the fifth.

For Ben Jonson, the most judicious of poets, he always writ properly, and as the character required; and I will not contest farther with my friends, who call that wit: it being very certain that even folly itself, well represented, is wit in a larger signification; and that there is fancy, as well as judgment, in it, though not

[30] *And the careful aptness of Horace.* — PETRONIUS, 118. 5.

so much or noble: because all poetry being imitation, that of folly is a lower exercise of fancy, though perhaps as difficult as the other; for it is a kind of looking downward in the poet, and representing that part of mankind which is below him.

In these low characters of vice and folly, lay the excellency of that inimitable writer; who, when at any time he aimed at wit in the strictest sense, that is, sharpness of conceit, was forced either to borrow from the ancients, as to my knowledge he did very much from Plautus; or, when he trusted himself alone, often fell into meanness of expression. Nay, he was not free from the lowest and most grovelling kind of wit, which we call clenches,[31] of which "Every Man in his Humour" is infinitely full; and, which is worse, the wittiest persons in the drama speak them. His other comedies are not exempt from them. Will you give me leave to name some few? Asper, in which character he personates himself (and he neither was nor thought himself a fool), exclaiming against the ignorant judges of the age, speaks thus:

> "How monstrous and detested is't, to see
> A fellow that has neither art nor brain,
> Sit like an *Aristarchus*, or *stark-ass*,
> Taking men's lives, with a *tobacco face*,
> In *snuff*," &c.

And presently after: "I marvel whose wit 'twas to put a prologue in yond Sackbut's mouth. They might well think he would be out of tune, and yet you'd play upon him too." — Will you [illegible] another of the same stamp? "O, I cannot abide these li[illegible] *sattin*, or rather *Satan*."

But, it may be, you will object that this was Asp[illegible] or Carlo Buffone; you shall, therefore, hear him s[illegible] person, and that in the two last lines, or sting[illegible] is inscribed to *Fine Grand*, who, he says, was [illegible] many things which he reckons there; and co[illegible]

> "Forty things more, dear *Grand*, which [illegible]
> For which, or pay me quickly, or I'll pay [illegible]

[31] puns.

This was then the mode of wit, the vice of the age, and not Ben Jonson's; for you see, a little before him, that admirable wit, Sir Philip Sidney, perpetually playing with his words. In his time, I believe, it ascended first into the pulpit, where (if you will give me leave to clench too) it yet finds the benefit of its clergy; for they are commonly the first corruptors of eloquence, and the last reformed from vicious oratory; as a famous Italian has observed before me, in his Treatise of the Corruption of the Italian Tongue; which he principally ascribes to priests and preaching friars.

But to conclude with what brevity I can, I will only add this in defence of our present writers, that, if they reach not some excellencies of Ben Jonson (which no age, I am confident, ever shall), yet, at least, they are above that meanness of thought which I have taxed, and which is frequent in him.

That the wit of this age is much more courtly, may easily be proved by viewing the characters of gentlemen which were written in the last. First for Jonson: — True-wit, in "The Silent Woman," was his master-piece; and True-wit was a scholar-like kind of man, a gentleman with an allay of pedantry, a man who seems mortified to the world by much reading. The best of his discourse is drawn, not from the knowledge of the town, but books; and, in short, he would be a fine gentleman in an university. Shakespeare shewed the best of his skill in his Mercutio; and he said himself that he was forced to kill him in the third act, to prevent being killed [illegible] him. But, for my part, I cannot find he was so dangerous a [illegible]: I see nothing in him but what was so exceeding harmless [illegible]ight have lived to the end of the play, and died in his [illegible] offence to any man.

[illegible]on John is our only bugbear; and yet I may affirm, [illegible] of flattery, that he now speaks better, and that [illegible]ntained with much more vigour in the fourth and [illegible]as by Fletcher in the three former. I have [illegible]l the wit of our predecessors, with all the [illegible] mes me, but, I am sure, their wit was not [illegible]; there was ever somewhat that was ill-bred

and clownish in it, and which confessed the conversation of the authors.

And this leads me to the last and greatest advantage of our writing, which proceeds from conversation. In the age wherein those poets lived, there was less of gallantry than in ours; neither did they keep the best company of theirs. Their fortune has been much like that of Epicurus, in the retirement of his gardens; to live almost unknown, and to be celebrated after their decease. I cannot find that any of them had been conversant in courts, except Ben Jonson; and his genius lay not so much that way as to make an improvement by it. Greatness was not then so easy of access, nor conversation so free, as now it is. I cannot, therefore, conceive it any insolence to affirm that by the knowledge and pattern of their wit who writ before us, and by the advantage of our own conversation, the discourse and raillery of our comedies excel what has been written by them. And this will be denied by none, but some few old fellows who value themselves on their acquaintance with the Black Friars; who, because they saw their plays, would pretend a right to judge ours. The memory of these grave gentlemen is their only plea for being wits. They can tell a story of Ben Jonson, and, perhaps, have had fancy enough to give a supper in the Apollo, that they might be called his sons:[32] And, because they were drawn in to be laughed at in those times, they think themselves now sufficiently entitled to laugh at ours. Learning I never saw in any of them; and wit no more than they could remember. In short, they were unlucky to have been bred in an unpolished age, and more unlucky to live to a refined one. They have lasted beyond their own, and are cast behind ours; and, not contented to have known little at the age of twenty, they boast of their ignorance at threescore.

Now, if they ask me, whence it is that our conversation is so much refined? I must freely, and without flattery, ascribe it to

[32] "The Apollo was Ben Jonson's favourite club-room in the Devil's Tavern. The custom of adopting his admirers and imitators by bestowing upon them the title of Son, is often alluded to in his works." — SCOTT.

the court; and, in it, particularly to the king, whose example gives a law to it. His own misfortunes, and the nation's, afforded him an opportunity, which is rarely allowed to sovereign princes, I mean of travelling, and being conversant in the most polished courts of Europe; and, thereby, of cultivating a spirit which was formed by nature to receive the impressions of a gallant and generous education. At his return, he found a nation lost as much in barbarism as in rebellion. And, as the excellency of his nature forgave the one, so the excellency of his manners reformed the other. The desire of imitating so great a pattern first awakened the dull and heavy spirits of the English from their natural reservedness; loosened them from their stiff forms of conversation, and made them easy and pliant to each other in discourse. Thus, insensibly, our way of living became more free; and the fire of the English wit, which was before stifled under a constrained, melancholy way of breeding, began first to display its force by mixing the solidity of our nation with the air and gayety of our neighbours. This being granted to be true, it would be a wonder if the poets, whose work is imitation, should be the only persons in three kingdoms who should not receive advantage by it; or, if they should not more easily imitate the wit and conversation of the present age than of the past.

Let us therefore admire the beauties and the heights of Shakespeare, without falling after him into carelessness, and, as I may call it, a lethargy of thought, for whole scenes together. Let us imitate, as we are able, the quickness and easiness of Fletcher, without proposing him as a pattern to us, either in the redundancy of his matter, or the incorrectness of his language. Let us admire his wit and sharpness of conceit; but let us at the same time acknowledge that it was seldom so fixed, and made proper to his character, as that the same things might not be spoken by any person in the play. Let us applaud his scenes of love; but let us confess that he understood not either greatness or perfect honour in the parts of any of his women. In fine, let us allow that he had so much fancy, as when he pleased he could write wit; but

that he wanted so much judgment, as seldom to have written humour, or described a pleasant folly. Let us ascribe to Jonson the height and accuracy of judgment in the ordering of his plots, his choice of characters, and maintaining what he had chosen to the end: But let us not think him a perfect pattern of imitation, except it be in humour; for love, which is the foundation of all comedies in other languages, is scarcely mentioned in any of his plays: And for humour itself, the poets of this age will be more wary than to imitate the meanness of his persons. Gentlemen will now be entertained with the follies of each other; and, though they allow Cobb and Tibb[33] to speak properly, yet they are not much pleased with their tankard, or with their rags: And surely their conversation can be no jest to them on the theatre, when they would avoid it in the street.

To conclude all, let us render to our predecessors what is their due, without confining ourselves to a servile imitation of all they writ; and, without assuming to ourselves the title of better poets, let us ascribe to the gallantry and civility of our age the advantage which we have above them, and, to our knowledge of the customs and manners of it, the happiness we have to please beyond them.

[33] A water-bearer and his wife, characters in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour." Cobb is named in the Epilogue to Dryden's "Conquest of Granada."

XIII.

3. *PREFACE TO THE FABLES.*

[Written in 1699.]

It remains that I say something of Chaucer in particular.[34]

In the first place, as he is the father of English poetry, so I hold him in the same degree of veneration as the Grecians held Homer, or the Romans Virgil. He is a perpetual fountain of good sense; learned in all sciences; and, therefore, speaks properly on all subjects. As he knew what to say, so he knows also when to leave off; a continence which is practised by few writers, and scarcely by any of the ancients, excepting Virgil and Horace. One of our late great poets[35] is sunk in his reputation, because he could never forgive any conceit which came in his way; but swept, like a drag-net, great and small. There was plenty enough, but the dishes were ill sorted; whole pyramids of sweetmeats for boys and women, but little of solid meat for men. All this proceeded not from any want of knowledge, but of judgment. Neither did he want that in discerning the beauties and faults of other poets, but only indulged himself in the luxury of writing; and perhaps knew it was a fault, but hoped the reader would not find it. For this reason, though he must always be thought a great poet, he is no longer esteemed a good writer; and for ten impressions, which his works have had in so many successive years, yet at present a hundred books are scarcely purchased once a twelvemonth; for, as my last Lord Rochester said, though somewhat profanely, "Not being of God, he could not stand."

Chaucer followed nature everywhere, but was never so bold to go beyond her; and there is a great difference of being *poeta* and *nimis poeta*,[36] if we may believe Catullus, as much as betwixt a modest behaviour and affectation. The verse of Chaucer, I confess, is not harmonious to us; but it is like the eloquence of one whom Tacitus commends, it was *auribus istius temporis accommo-*

[34] Dryden had just drawn a parallel between Ovid and Chaucer, to the advantage of the latter. [35] Cowley. [36] *too much a poet.*

data.[37] They who lived with him, and some time after him, thought it musical; and it continues so even in our judgment, if compared with the numbers of Lidgate and Gower, his contemporaries;—there is the rude sweetness of a Scotch tune in it, which is natural and pleasing, though not perfect. It is true, I cannot go so far as he[38] who published the last edition of him; for he would make us believe the fault is in our ears, and there were really ten syllables in a verse where we find but nine; but this opinion is not worth confuting; it is so gross and obvious an error, that common sense (which is a rule in everything but matters of faith and revelation) must convince the reader that equality of numbers, in every verse which we call heroic, was either not known, or not always practised, in Chaucer's age. It were an easy matter to produce some thousands of his verses, which are lame for want of half a foot, and sometimes a whole one, and which no pronunciation can make otherwise.[39] We can only say that he lived in the infancy of our poetry, and that nothing is brought to perfection at the first. We must be children before we grow men. There was an Ennius, and in process of time a Lucilius, and a Lucretius, before Virgil and Horace; even after Chaucer there was a Spenser, a Harrington, a Fairfax, before Waller and Denham were in being; and our numbers were in their nonage till these last appeared. I need say little of his parentage, life and fortunes; they are to be found at large in all the editions of his works. He was employed abroad, and favoured, by Edward III, Richard II, and Henry IV, and was poet, as I suppose, to all three of them. In Richard's time, I doubt, he was a little dipt in the rebellion of the Commons; and being brother-in-law to John of Gaunt, it was no wonder if he followed the fortunes of that family; and was well with Henry IV when he had deposed his predecessor. Neither is it to be admired that Henry, who was a wise as well as a valiant prince, who claimed by succession, and was sensible that his title was not sound, but was rightfully in Mortimer, who had married

[37] *suited to the ears of that time.* [38] Thomas Speght.

[39] Dryden was ignorant of Chaucer's grammar and pronunciation, on which his rhythm depends, and hence made these erroneous statements.

the heir of York; it was not to be admired, I say, if that great politician should be pleased to have the greatest wit of those times in his interests, and to be the trumpet of his praises. Augustus had given him the example, by the advice of Maecenas, who recommended Virgil and Horace to him; whose praises helped to make him popular while he was alive, and after his death have made him precious to posterity. As for the religion of our poet, he seems to have some little bias towards the opinions of Wickliffe, after John of Gaunt his patron; somewhat of which appears in the tale of "Pierce Plowman;"[40] yet I cannot blame him for inveighing so sharply against the vices of the clergy in his age: their pride, their ambition, their pomp, their avarice, their worldly interest, deserved the lashes which he gave them, both in that, and in most of his "Canterbury Tales." Neither has his contemporary Boccace spared them: Yet both those poets lived in much esteem with good and holy men in orders; for the scandal which is given by particular priests reflects not on the sacred function: Chaucer's Monk, his Canon and his Friar, took not from the character of his Good Parson. A satirical poet is the check of the laymen on bad priests. We are only to take care, that we involve not the innocent with the guilty in the same condemnation. The good cannot be too much honoured, nor the bad too coarsely used: for the corruption of the best becomes the worst. When a clergyman is whipped, his gown is first taken off, by which the dignity of his order is secured. If he be wrongfully accused, he has his action of slander; and it is at the poet's peril if he transgress the law. But they will tell us, that all kind of satire, though never so well deserved by particular priests, yet brings the whole order into contempt. Is then the peerage of England anything dishonoured when a peer suffers for his treason? If he [be?] libelled, or any way defamed, he has his *scandalum magnatum*[41] to punish the offender. They who use this kind of argu-

[40] Langland's "Vision of Piers Plowman," whose views Dryden seems to confound with Chaucer's, and his poem with the spurious "Plowman's Tale."

[41] "A defamatory speech or writing made or published to the injury of a person of dignity."

ment, seem to be conscious to themselves of somewhat which has deserved the poet's lash, and are less concerned for their public capacity than for their private; at least there is pride at the bottom of their reasoning. If the faults of men in orders are only to be judged among themselves, they are all in some sort parties; for, since they say the honour of their order is concerned in every member of it, how can we be sure that they will be impartial judges? How far I may be allowed to speak my opinion in this case, I know not; but I am sure a dispute of this nature caused mischief in abundance betwixt a king of England and an archbishop of Canterbury; one standing up for the laws of his land, and the other for the honour, as he called it, of God's church; which ended in the murder of the prelate, and in the whipping of his majesty from post to pillar for his penance. The learned and ingenious Dr. Drake has saved one the labour of inquiring into the esteem and reverence which the priests have had of old; and I would rather extend than diminish any part of it; yet I must needs say, that when a priest provokes me without any occasion given him, I have no reason, unless it be the charity of a Christian, to forgive him: *prior læsit*[42] is justification sufficient in the civil law. If I answer him in his own language, self-defence, I am sure, must be allowed me; and if I carry it farther, even to a sharp recrimination, somewhat may be indulged to human frailty. Yet my resentment has not wrought so far, but that I have followed Chaucer in his character of a holy man, and have enlarged on that subject with some pleasure, reserving to myself the right, if I shall think fit hereafter, to describe another sort of priests, such as are more easily to be found than the Good Parson; such as have given the last blow to Christianity in this age, by a practice so contrary to their doctrine. But this will keep cold till another time.[43] In the meanwhile, I take up Chaucer where I left him.

[42] *he first did the injury.*

[43] This digression of Dryden's seems to be aimed at Jeremy Collier, whose "Short View of the Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage" was published in 1698.

He must have been a man of a most wonderful comprehensive nature, because, as it has been truly observed of him, he has taken into the compass of his "Canterbury Tales" the various manners and humours (as we now call them) of the whole English nation in his age. Not a single character has escaped him. All his pilgrims are severally distinguished from each other; and not only in their inclinations, but in their very physiognomies and persons. Baptista Porta[44] could not have described their natures better than by the marks which the poet gives them.

The matter and manner of their tales, and of their telling, are so suited to their different educations, humours, and callings, that each of them would be improper in any other mouth. Even the grave and serious characters are distinguished by their several sorts of gravity: their discourses are such as belong to their age, their calling, and their breeding; such as are becoming of them, and of them only. Some of his persons are vicious, and some virtuous; some are unlearned, or (as Chaucer calls them) lewd,[45] and some are learned. Even the ribaldry of the low characters is different; the Reeve, the Miller, and the Cook, are several men, and distinguished from each other as much as the mincing Lady Prioress, and the broad-speaking, gap-toothed,[46] Wife of Bath. But enough of this; there is such a variety of game springing up before me, that I am distracted in my choice, and know not which to follow. It is sufficient to say, according to the poorest, that here is God's plenty. We have our forefathers and great-grand-dames all before us, as they were in Chaucer's days; their general characters are still remaining in mankind, and even in England, though they are called by other names than those of monks, and friars, and canons, and lady abbesses, and nuns; for mankind is ever the same, and nothing lost out of nature, though everything is altered. May I have leave to do myself the justice, (since my

[44] "A famous Italian physiognomist."

[45] *lewd* meant *unlearned* in Chaucer's time.

[46] *gat-tothed*, Prologue, 468, having teeth wide apart. See note in Skeat's edition of Morris's "Prologue and Knight's Tale."

enemies will do me none, and are so far from granting me to be a good poet, that they will not allow me so much as to be a Christian, or a moral man,) may I have leave, I say, to inform my reader, that I have confined my choice to such tales of Chaucer as savour nothing of immodesty. If I had desired more to please than to instruct, the Reeve, the Miller, the Shipman, the Merchant, the Sumner, and, above all, the Wife of Bath, in the prologue to her tale, would have procured me as many friends and readers, as there are beaux and ladies of pleasure in the town. But I will no more offend against good manners. I am sensible, as I ought to be, of the scandal I have given by my loose writings; and make what reparation I am able, by this public acknowledgment. If anything of this nature, or of profaneness, be crept into these poems, I am so far from defending it, that I disown it, *totum hoc indictum volo*.[47] Chaucer makes another manner of apology for his broad speaking, and Boccace makes the like; but I will follow neither of them.[48]

* * * * * *

I have almost done with Chaucer, when I have answered some objections relating to my present work. I find some people are offended that I have turned these tales into modern English; because they think them unworthy of my pains, and look on Chaucer as a dry, old-fashioned wit, not worthy reviving. I have often heard the late Earl of Leicester say, that Mr. Cowley himself was of that opinion; who, having read him over at my lord's request, declared he had no taste of him. I dare not advance my opinion against the judgment of so great an author; but I think it fair, however, to leave the decision to the public. Mr. Cowley was too modest to set up for a dictator; and being shocked perhaps with his old style, never examined into the depth of his good sense. Chaucer, I confess, is a rough diamond, and must first be polished, ere he shines. I deny not likewise, that, living in our early days of poetry, he writes not always of a piece; but

[47] *I wish it altogether unsaid.*

[48] Dryden quotes here Chaucer's Prologue, 726–742, with brief comment.

sometimes mingles trivial things with those of greater moment. Sometimes also, though not often, he runs riot, like Ovid, and knows not when he has said enough. But there are more great wits beside Chaucer, whose fault is their excess of conceits, and those ill-sorted. An author is not to write all he can, but only all he ought. Having observed this redundancy in Chaucer, (as it is an easy matter for a man of ordinary parts to find a fault in one of greater,) I have not tied myself to a literal translation; but have often omitted what I judged unnecessary, or not of dignity enough to appear in the company of better thoughts. I have presumed farther, in some places, and added somewhat of my own where I thought my author was deficient, and had not given his thoughts their true lustre, for want of words in the beginning of our language. And to this I was the more emboldened, because (if I may be permitted to say it of myself) I found I had a soul congenial to his, and that I had been conversant in the same studies. Another poet, in another age, may take the same liberty with my writings; if at least they live long enough to deserve correction. It was also necessary sometimes to restore the sense of Chaucer, which was lost or mangled in the errors of the press. Let this example suffice at present: in the story of Palamon and Arcite, where the temple of Diana is described, you find these verses in all the editions of our author:

> "Ther saw I Dane yturned til a tree,
> I mene not hire the goddesse Diane,
> But Venus daughter, which that hight Dane;" [49]

which, after a little consideration, I knew was to be reformed into this sense, — that Daphne, the daughter of Peneus, was turned into a tree. I durst not make thus bold with Ovid, lest some future Milbourne should arise, and say, I vary from my author, because I understood him not.

But there are other judges, who think I ought not to have translated Chaucer into English, out of a quite contrary notion: they

[49] This error of *Venus* for *Peneus* was corrected by Tyrwhitt, being an error of the press; but Dryden reads *hight* for *highte*, which destroys the rhythm. For a better text, see Skeat's Morris's Knight's Tale, 1204–1206.

suppose there is a certain veneration due to his old language; and that it is little less than profanation and sacrilege to alter it. They are farther of opinion, that somewhat of his good sense will suffer in this transfusion, and much of the beauty of his thoughts will infallibly be lost, which appear with more grace in their old habit. Of this opinion was that excellent person, whom I mentioned, the late Earl of Leicester, who valued Chaucer as much as Mr. Cowley despised him. My lord dissuaded me from this attempt, (for I was thinking of it some years before his death,) and his authority prevailed so far with me, as to defer my undertaking while he lived, in deference to him: yet my reason was not convinced with what he urged against it. If the first end of a writer be to be understood, then, as his language grows obsolete, his thoughts must grow obscure:

> *Multa renascentur, quæ jam cecidere, cadentque*
> *Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula, si volet usus,*
> *Quem penes arbitrium est et jus et norma loquendi.*[50]

When an ancient word, for its sound and significancy, deserves to be revived, I have that reasonable veneration for antiquity to restore it. All beyond this is superstition. Words are not like landmarks, so sacred as never to be removed; customs are changed, and even statutes are silently repealed, when the reason ceases for which they were enacted. As for the other part of the argument, — that his thoughts will lose of their original beauty by the innovation of words, — in the first place, not only their beauty, but their being is lost, where they are no longer understood, which is the present case. I grant that something must be lost in all transfusion, that is, in all translations; but the sense will remain, which would otherwise be lost, or at least be maimed when it is scarce intelligible, and that but to a few. How few are there, who can read Chaucer so as to understand him perfectly? And if imperfectly, then with less profit, and no pleasure. It is not for the use of some old Saxon friends, that I have taken these pains with

[50] *Many words will revive that have now fallen, and will fall that are now in honor, if custom wills it, in whose power is the decision and the law and the rule of speech.* — HORACE, *Ars Poetica*, 70–72.

him: let them neglect my version, because they have no need of it. I made it for their sakes, who understand sense and poetry as well as they, when that poetry and sense is put into words which they understand. I will go farther, and dare to add, that what beauties I lose in some places, I give to others which had them not originally: but in this I may be partial to myself; let the reader judge, and I submit to his decision. Yet I think I have just occasion to complain of them, who, because they understand Chaucer, would deprive the greater part of their countrymen of the same advantage, and hoard him up, as misers do their grandam gold, only to look on it themselves, and hinder others from making use of it. In sum, I seriously protest that no man ever had, or can have, a greater veneration for Chaucer than myself. I have translated some part of his works, only that I might perpetuate his memory, or at least refresh it, amongst my countrymen. If I have altered him anywhere for the better, I must at the same time acknowledge that I could have done nothing without him. *Facile est inventis addere*[51] is no great commendation; and I am not so vain to think I have deserved a greater. I will conclude what I have to say of him singly, with this one remark: A lady of my acquaintance, who keeps a kind of correspondence with some authors of the fair sex in France, has been informed by them that Mademoiselle de Scuderi, who is as old as Sibyl, and inspired like her by the same god of poetry, is at this time translating Chaucer into modern French.[52] From which I gather, that he has been formerly translated into the old Provençal; for how she should come to understand old English, I know not. But the matter of fact being true, it makes me think that there is something in it like fatality; that, after certain periods of time, the fame and memory of great wits should be renewed, as Chaucer is both in France and England. If this be wholly chance, it is extraordinary; and I dare not call it more, for fear of being taxed with superstition.

[51] *It is easy to add to what has been found.*

[52] "This lady lived to the age of ninety-four . . . [and] died about eighteen months after this discourse was written. There is no reason to think she was seriously engaged in translating Chaucer." — SCOTT.

XIV.

JONATHAN SWIFT.

(1667–1745.)

A FULL AND TRUE ACCOUNT OF THE BATTLE FOUGHT LAST FRIDAY BETWEEN THE ANCIENT AND THE MODERN BOOKS IN SAINT JAMES'S LIBRARY.

[Published in 1704, but written in 1697.]

The Bookseller to the Reader.

The following discourse, as it is unquestionably of the same author, so it seems to have been written about the same time with ["The Tale of a Tub"]*, I mean the year 1697, when the famous dispute was on foot about Ancient and Modern Learning. The controversy took its rise from an essay of Sir William Temple's upon that subject; which was answered by W. Wotton, B. D., with an appendix by Dr. Bentley, endeavouring to destroy the credit of Æsop and Phalaris for authors, whom Sir William Temple had, in the essay before mentioned, highly commended. In that appendix the Doctor falls hard upon a new edition of Phalaris, put out by the Honourable Charles Boyle, now Earl of Orrery, to which Mr. Boyle replied at large with great learning and wit; and the Doctor voluminously rejoined. In this dispute the town highly resented to see a person of Sir William Temple's character and merits roughly used by the two reverend gentlemen aforesaid, and without any manner of provocation. At length, there appearing no end of the quarrel, our author tells us that the BOOKS in St. James's Library, looking upon themselves as parties princi-

* "the former," in the original text, as the two books were published together.

pally concerned, took up the controversy, and came to a decisive battle; but the manuscript, by the injury of fortune or weather, being in several places imperfect, we cannot learn to which side the victory fell.

I must warn the reader to beware of applying to persons what is here meant only of books, in the most literal sense. So, when Virgil is mentioned, we are not to understand the person of a famous poet called by that name; but only certain sheets of paper bound up in leather, containing in print the works of the said poet: and so of the rest.

The Preface of the Author.

Satire is a sort of glass wherein beholders do generally discover everybody's face but their own; which is the chief reason for that kind of reception it meets with in the world, and that so very few are offended with it. But, if it should happen otherwise, the danger is not great; and I have learned from long experience never to apprehend mischief from those understandings I have been able to provoke: for anger and fury, though they add strength to the sinews of the body, yet are found to relax those of the mind, and to render all its efforts feeble and impotent.

There is a brain that will endure but one scumming; let the owner gather it with discretion, and manage his little stock with husbandry; but, of all things, let him beware of bringing it under the lash of his betters, because that will make it all bubble up into impertinence, and he will find no new supply. Wit without knowledge being a sort of cream, which gathers in a night to the top, and by a skilful hand may be soon whipped into froth; but once scummed away, what appears underneath will be fit for nothing but to be thrown to the hogs.

The Battle of the Books.

Whoever examines, with due circumspection, into the annual records of Time, will find it remarked that War is the child of Pride, and Pride the daughter of Riches: — the former of which assertions may be soon granted, but one cannot so easily subscribe to the latter; for Pride is nearly related to Beggary and Want, either by father or mother, and sometimes by both: and, to speak naturally, it very seldom happens among men to fall out when all have enough; invasions usually travelling from north to south, that is to say, from poverty to plenty. The most ancient and natural grounds of quarrels are lust and avarice; which, though we may allow to be brethren, or collateral branches of pride, are certainly the issues of want. For, to speak in the phrase of writers upon politics, we may observe in the republic of dogs, which in its original seems to be an institution of the many, that the whole state is ever in the profoundest peace after a full meal; and that civil broils arise among them when it happens for one great bone to be seized on by some leading dog, who either divides it among the few, and then it falls to an oligarchy, or keeps it to himself, and then it runs up to a tyranny. . . . Again, if we look upon any of these republics engaged in a foreign war, either of invasion or defence, we shall find the same reasoning will serve as to the grounds and occasions of each; and that poverty or want, in some degree or other (whether real or in opinion, which makes no alteration in the case), has a great share, as well as pride, on the part of the aggressor.

Now, whoever will please to take this scheme, and either reduce or adapt it to an intellectual state or commonwealth of learning, will soon discover the first ground of disagreement between the two great parties at this time in arms, and may form just conclusions upon the merits of either cause. But the issue or events of this war are not so easy to conjecture at; for the present quarrel is so inflamed by the warm heads of either faction, and the preten-

sions somewhere or other so exorbitant, as not to admit the least overtures of accommodation. This quarrel first began, as I have heard it affirmed by an old dweller in the neighbourhood, about a small spot of ground, lying and being upon one of the two tops of the hill Parnassus; the highest and largest of which had, it seems, been time out of mind in quiet possession of certain tenants, called the Ancients; and the other was held by the Moderns. But these, disliking their present station, sent certain ambassadors to the Ancients, complaining of a great nuisance; how the height of that part of Parnassus quite spoiled the prospect of theirs, especially towards the East; and therefore, to avoid a war, offered them the choice of this alternative, either that the Ancients would please to remove themselves and their effects down to the lower summit, which the Moderns would graciously surrender to them, and advance into their place; or else the said Ancients will give leave to the Moderns to come with shovels and mattocks, and level the said hill as low as they shall think it convenient. To which the Ancients made answer, how little they expected such a message as this from a colony whom they had admitted, out of their own free grace, to so near a neighbourhood. That, as to their own seat, they were *aborigines* of it, and therefore to talk with them of a removal or surrender was a language they did not understand. That, if the height of the hill on their side shortened the prospect of the Moderns, it was a disadvantage they could not help; but desired them to consider whether that injury (if it be any) were not largely recompensed by the shade and shelter it afforded them. That, as to the levelling or digging down, it was either folly or ignorance to propose it, if they did or did not know how that side of the hill was an entire rock, which would break their tools and hearts, without any damage to itself. That they would therefore advise the Moderns rather to raise their own side of the hill than dream of pulling down that of the Ancients; to the former of which they would not only give license, but also largely contribute. All this was rejected by the Moderns with much indignation, who still insisted upon one of the two expedients; and so this differ-

ence broke out into a long and obstinate war, maintained on the one part by resolution, and by the courage of certain leaders and allies; but, on the other, by the greatness of their number, upon all defeats affording continual recruits. In this quarrel whole rivulets of ink have been exhausted, and the virulence of both parties enormously augmented. Now, it must be here understood, that ink is the great missive weapon in all battles of the learned, which, conveyed through a sort of engine called a quill, infinite numbers of these are darted at the enemy by the valiant on each side, with equal skill and violence, as if it were an engagement of porcupines. This malignant liquor was compounded, by the engineer who invented it, of two ingredients which are gall and copperas; by its bitterness and venom to suit, in some degree, as well as to foment, the genius of the combatants. And as the Grecians, after an engagement, when they could not agree about the victory, were wont to set up trophies on both sides, the beaten party being content to be at the same expense, to keep itself in countenance (a laudable and ancient custom, happily revived of late in the art of war), so the learned, after a sharp and bloody dispute, do, on both sides, hang out their trophies too, whichever comes by the worst. These trophies have largely inscribed on them the merits of the cause; a full impartial account of such a Battle, and how the victory fell clearly to the party that set them up. They are known to the world under several names; as disputes, arguments, rejoinders, brief considerations, answers, replies, remarks, reflections, objections, confutations. For a very few days they are fixed up in all public places, either by themselves or their representatives, for passengers to gaze at; whence the chiefest and largest are removed to certain magazines they call *libraries*, there to remain in a quarter purposely assigned them, and thenceforth begin to be called *books of controversy*.

In these books is wonderfully instilled and preserved the spirit of each warrior while he is alive; and after his death his soul transmigrates thither to inform them. This, at least, is the more common opinion; but I believe it is with libraries as with other

cemeteries, where some philosophers affirm that a certain spirit, which they call *brutum hominis*,[1] hovers over the monument, till the body is corrupted and turns to dust or to worms, but then vanishes or dissolves; so we may say a restless spirit haunts over every book, till dust or worms have seized upon it — which to some may happen in a few days, but to others later — and therefore, books of controversy being, of all others, haunted by the most disorderly spirits, have always been confined in a separate lodge from the rest, and for fear of a mutual violence against each other, it was thought prudent by our ancestors to bind them to the peace with strong iron chains. Of which invention the original occasion was this: When the works of Scotus first came out, they were carried to a certain library, and had lodgings appointed them; but this author was no sooner settled than he went to visit his master Aristotle, and there both concerted together to seize Plato by main force, and turn him out from his ancient station among the divines, where he had peaceably dwelt near eight hundred years. The attempt succeeded, and the two usurpers have reigned ever since in his stead; but, to maintain quiet for the future, it was decreed that all polemics of the larger size should be held fast with a chain.

By this expedient, the public peace of libraries might certainly have been preserved if a new species of controversial books had not arose of late years, instinct with a more malignant spirit, from the war above mentioned between the learned about the higher summit of Parnassus.

When these books were first admitted into the public libraries, I remember to have said, upon occasion, to several persons concerned, how I was sure they would create broils wherever they came, unless a world of care were taken; and therefore I advised that the champions of each side should be coupled together, or otherwise mixed, that, like the blending of contrary poisons, their malignity might be employed among themselves. And it seems I was neither an ill prophet nor an ill counsellor; for it was nothing

[1] *the irrational part of man.*

else but the neglect of this caution which gave occasion to the terrible fight that happened on Friday last between the Ancient and Modern Books in the King's Library. Now, because the talk of this battle is so fresh in everybody's mouth, and the expectation of the town so great to be informed in the particulars, I, being possessed of all qualifications requisite in an historian, and retained by neither party, have resolved to comply with the urgent importunity of my friends, by writing down a full impartial account thereof.

The guardian of the Regal Library,[2] a person of great valour, but chiefly renowned for his humanity, had been a fierce champion for the Moderns, and, in an engagement upon Parnassus, had vowed with his own hands to knock down two of the ancient chiefs[3] who guarded a small pass on the superior rock, but, endeavouring to climb up, was cruelly obstructed by his own unhappy weight and tendency towards his centre, a quality to which those of the Modern party are extremely subject; for, being light-headed, they have, in speculation, a wonderful agility, and conceive nothing too high for them to mount, but, in reducing to practice, discover a mighty pressure about their posteriors and their heels. Having thus failed in his design, the disappointed champion bore a cruel rancour to the Ancients, which he resolved to gratify by showing all marks of his favour to the books of their adversaries, and lodging them in the fairest apartments; when, at the same time, whatever book had the boldness to own itself for an advocate of the Ancients was buried alive in some obscure corner, and threatened, upon the least displeasure, to be turned out of doors. Besides, it so happened that about this time there was a strange confusion of place among all the books in the library,

[2] Richard Bentley, the noted classical scholar and critic, author of the "Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris." Boyle, who edited "The Epistles of Phalaris," charged that Bentley, "of his very great humanity," refused him the use of a manuscript of these Epistles. (See Bentley's Life, by Professor JEBB, in "English Men of Letters.")

[3] Phalaris and Æsop.

for which several reasons were assigned. Some imputed it to a great heap of learned dust, which a perverse wind blew off from a shelf of Moderns into the keeper's eyes. Others affirmed he had a humour to pick the worms out of the schoolmen, and swallow them fresh and fasting, whereof some fell upon his spleen, and some climbed up into his head, to the great perturbation of both. And lastly, others maintained that, by walking much in the dark about the library, he had quite lost the situation of it out of his head; and therefore, in replacing his books, he was apt to mistake and clap Descartes next to Aristotle, poor Plato had got between Hobbes and the Seven Wise Masters, and Virgil was hemmed in with Dryden on one side and Wither on the other.

Meanwhile, those books that were advocates for the Moderns, chose out one from among them to make a progress through the whole library, examine the number and strength of their party, and concert their affairs. This messenger performed all things very industriously, and brought back with him a list of their forces, in all fifty thousand, consisting chiefly of light-horse, heavy-armed foot, and mercenaries; whereof the foot were in general but sorrily armed and worse clad; their horses large, but extremely out of case and heart; however, some few, by trading among the Ancients, had furnished themselves tolerably enough.

While things were in this ferment, discord grew extremely high; hot words passed on both sides, and ill blood was plentifully bred. Here a solitary Ancient, squeezed up among a whole shelf of Moderns, offered fairly to dispute the case, and to prove by manifest reason that the priority was due to them from long possession, and in regard of their prudence, antiquity, and, above all, their great merits toward the Moderns. But these denied the premises, and seemed very much to wonder how the Ancients could pretend to insist upon their antiquity, when it was so plain (if they went to that) that the Moderns were much the more ancient of the two. As for any obligations they owed to the Ancients, they renounced them all. "It is true," said they, "we are informed some few of our party have been so mean as to bor-

row their subsistence from you, but the rest, infinitely the greater number (and especially we French and English), were so far from stooping to so base an example, that there never passed, till this very hour, six words between us. For our horses were of our own breeding, our arms of our own forging, and our clothes of our own cutting out and sewing." Plato was by chance up on the next shelf, and observing those that spoke to be in the ragged plight mentioned a while ago, their jades lean and foundered, their weapons of rotten wood, their armour rusty, and nothing but rags underneath, he laughed loud, and in his pleasant way swore, By ——, he believed them.

Now, the Moderns had not proceeded in their late negociation with secrecy enough to escape the notice of the enemy. For those advocates who had begun the quarrel, by setting first on foot the dispute of precedency, talked so loud of coming to a battle, that Sir William Temple happened to overhear them, and gave immediate intelligence to the Ancients, who thereupon drew up their scattered troops together, resolving to act upon the defensive; upon which, several of the Moderns fled over to their party, and among the rest Temple himself. This Temple, having been educated and long conversed among the Ancients, was, of all the Moderns, their greatest favourite, and became their greatest champion.

Things were at this crisis when a material accident fell out. For, upon the highest corner of a large window, there dwelt a certain spider, swollen up to the first magnitude by the destruction of infinite numbers of flies, whose spoils lay scattered before the gates of his palace, like human bones before the cave of some giant. The avenues to his castle were guarded with turnpikes[4] and palisadoes, all after the modern way of fortification. After you had passed several courts you came to the centre, wherein you might behold the constable himself in his own lodgings, which had windows fronting to each avenue, and ports to sally out upon all occasions of prey or defence. In this mansion he had for

[4] "Pikes to turn back assailants." — NARES.

some time dwelt in peace and plenty, without danger to his person by swallows from above, or to his palace by brooms from below; when it was the pleasure of fortune to conduct thither a wandering bee, to whose curiosity a broken pane in the glass had discovered itself, and in he went, where, expatiating a while, he at last happened to alight upon one of the outward walls of the spider's citadel; which, yielding to the unequal weight, sunk down to the very foundation. Thrice he endeavoured to force his passage, and thrice the centre shook. The spider within, feeling the terrible convulsion, supposed at first that nature was approaching to her final dissolution, or else that Beelzebub, with all his legions, was come to revenge the death of many thousands of his subjects whom his enemy had slain and devoured. However, he at length valiantly resolved to issue forth and meet his fate. Meanwhile the bee had acquitted himself of his toils, and, posted securely at some distance, was employed in cleansing his wings, and disengaging them from the ragged remnants of the cobweb. By this time the spider was adventured out, when, beholding the chasms, the ruins, and dilapidations of his fortress, he was very near at his wit's end; he stormed and swore like a madman, and swelled till he was ready to burst. At length, casting his eye upon the bee, and wisely gathering causes from events (for they knew each other by sight), "A plague split you," said he; . . . "is it you, with a vengeance, that have made this litter here; could not you look before you, and be ——? Do you think I have nothing else to do (in the devil's name) but to mend and repair after [you]?" "Good words, friend," said the bee, (having now pruned[5] himself, and being disposed to droll); "I'll give you my hand and word to come near your kennel no more; I was never in such a confounded pickle since I was born." "Sirrah," replied the spider, "if it were not for breaking an old custom in our family, never to stir abroad against an enemy, I should come and teach you better manners." "I pray have patience," said the bee, "or you'll spend your substance, and, for aught I see, you may stand in need

[5] trimmed himself, removed the cobwebs.

of it all, towards the repair of your house." "Rogue, rogue," replied the spider, "yet methinks you should have more respect to a person whom all the world allows to be so much your betters." "By my troth," said the bee, "the comparison will amount to a very good jest, and you will do me a favour to let me know the reasons that all the world is pleased to use in so hopeful a dispute." At this the spider, having swelled himself into the size and posture of a disputant, began his argument in the true spirit of controversy, with resolution to be heartily scurrilous and angry, to urge on his own reasons without the least regard to the answers or objections of his opposite, and fully predetermined in his mind against all conviction.

"Not to disparage myself," said he, "by the comparison with such a rascal, what art thou but a vagabond without house or home, without stock or inheritance? born to no possession of your own, but a pair of wings and a drone-pipe. Your livelihood is a universal plunder upon nature; a freebooter over fields and gardens; and, for the sake of stealing, will rob a nettle as easily as a violet. Whereas I am a domestic animal, furnished with a native stock within myself. This large castle (to show my improvements in the mathematics) is all built with my own hands, and the materials extracted altogether out of my own person."

"I am glad," answered the bee, "to hear you grant at least that I am come honestly by my wings and my voice; for then, it seems, I am obliged to Heaven alone for my flights and my music; and Providence would never have bestowed on me two such gifts without designing them for the noblest ends. I visit, indeed, all the flowers and blossoms of the field and garden, but whatever I collect thence enriches myself without the least injury to their beauty, their smell, or their taste. Now, for you and your skill in architecture and other mathematics, I have little to say: in that building of yours there might, for aught I know, have been labour and method enough; but, by woeful experience for us both, it is too plain the materials are naught; and I hope you will henceforth take warning, and consider duration and matter, as

well as method and art. You boast, indeed, of being obliged to no other creature, but of drawing and spinning out all from yourself; that is to say, if we may judge of the liquor in the vessel by what issues out, you possess a good plentiful store of dirt and poison in your breast; and, though I would by no means lessen or disparage your genuine stock of either, yet I doubt you are somewhat obliged, for an increase of both, to a little foreign assistance. Your inherent portion of dirt does not fail of acquisitions, by sweepings exhaled from below; and one insect furnishes you with a share of poison to destroy another. So that, in short, the question comes all to this: whether[6] is the nobler being of the two, that which, by a lazy contemplation of four inches round, by an overweening pride, feeding and engendering on itself, turns all into excrement and venom, producing nothing at all but flybane and a cobweb; or that which, by a universal range, with long search, much study, true judgment, and distinction of things, brings home honey and wax."

This dispute was managed with such eagerness, clamour, and warmth, that the two parties of books, in arms below, stood silent a while, waiting in suspense what would be the issue; which was not long undetermined: for the bee, grown impatient at so much loss of time, fled straight away to a bed of roses, without looking for a reply, and left the spider, like an orator, collected in himself, and just prepared to burst out.

It happened upon this emergency that Æsop broke silence first. He had been of late most barbarously treated by a strange effect of the Regent's humanity, who had torn off his title-page, sorely defaced one half of his leaves, and chained him fast among a shelf of Moderns. Where, soon discovering how high the quarrel was likely to proceed, he tried all his arts, and turned himself to a thousand forms. At length, in the borrowed shape of an ass, the Regent mistook him for a Modern; by which means he had time and opportunity to escape to the Ancients, just when the spider and the bee were entering into their contest; to which

[6] Late use of the old pronoun = which of the two.

he gave his attention with a world of pleasure, and, when it was ended, swore in the loudest key that in all his life he had never known two cases so parallel and adapt to each other as that in the window and this upon the shelves. "The disputants," said he, "have admirably managed the dispute between them, have taken in the full strength of all that is to be said on both sides, exhausted the substance of every argument *pro* and *con*. It is but to adjust the reasonings of both to the present quarrel, then to compare and apply the labours and fruits of each, as the bee has learnedly deduced them, and we shall find the conclusion fall plain and close upon the Moderns and us. For pray, gentlemen, was ever anything so modern as the spider in his air, his turns, and his paradoxes? he argues in the behalf of you, his brethren, and himself, with many boastings of his native stock and great genius; that he spins and spits wholly from himself, and scorns to own any obligation or assistance from without. Then he displays to you his great skill in architecture and improvement in the mathematics. To all this the bee, as an advocate retained by us, the Ancients, thinks fit to answer, that, if one may judge of the great genius or inventions of the Moderns by what they have produced, you will hardly have countenance to bear you out in boasting of either. Erect your schemes with as much method and skill as you please; yet, if the materials be nothing but dirt, spun out of your own entrails (the guts of modern brains), the edifice will conclude at last in a cobweb; the duration of which, like that of other spiders' webs, may be imputed to their being forgotten, or neglected, or hid in a corner. For anything else of genuine that the Moderns may pretend to, I cannot recollect; unless it be a large vein of wrangling and satire, much of a nature and substance with the spiders' poison; which, however they pretend to spit wholly out of themselves, is improved by the same arts, by feeding upon the insects and vermin of the age. As for us, the Ancients, we are content with the bee, to pretend to nothing of our own beyond our wings and our voice: that is to say, our flights and our language. For the rest, whatever we have got

has been by infinite labour and search, and ranging through every corner of nature; the difference is, that, instead of dirt and poison, we have rather chosen to fill our hives with honey and wax; thus furnishing mankind with the two noblest of things, which are sweetness and light."[7]

It is wonderful to conceive the tumult arisen among the books upon the close of this long descant of Æsop: both parties took the hint, and heightened their animosities so on a sudden, that they resolved it should come to a battle. Immediately the two main bodies withdrew, under their several ensigns, to the farther parts of the library, and there entered into cabals and consults upon the present emergency. The Moderns were in very warm debates upon the choice of their leaders; and nothing less than the fear impending from their enemies could have kept them from mutinies upon this occasion. The difference was greatest among the horse, where every private trooper pretended to the chief command, from Tasso and Milton to Dryden and Wither. The light-horse were commanded by Cowley and Despreaux.[8] There came the bowmen under their valiant leaders, Descartes, Gassendi, and Hobbes; whose strength was such that they could shoot their arrows beyond the atmosphere, never to fall down again, but turn, like that of Evander, into meteors; or, like the cannon ball, into stars. Paracelsus brought a squadron . . . from the snowy mountains of Rhætia. There came a vast body of dragoons, of different nations, under the leading of Harvey,[9] there great *agas:* part armed with sithes, the weapons of death; part with lances and long knives, all steeped in poison; part shot bullets of a most malignant nature, and used white powder, which infallibly killed without report. There came several bodies of heavy-armed foot, all mercenaries, under the ensigns of Guicciardini, Davila, Polydore Virgil, Buchanan, Mariana, Camden, and others. The engineers

[7] The original of Mr. Matthew Arnold's favorite phrase.

[8] *i.e.* Boileau.

[9] Sir William Temple had taken exception to Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood.

were commanded by Regiomontanus and Wilkins. The rest was a confused multitude, led by Scotus, Aquinas, and Bellarmine; of mighty bulk and stature, but without either arms, courage, or discipline. In the last place came infinite swarms of *calones*,[10] a disorderly rout led by L'Estrange; rogues and raggamuffins, that follow the camp for nothing but the plunder, all without coats to cover them.

The army of the Ancients was much fewer in number; Homer led the horse, and Pindar the light-horse; Euclid was chief engineer; Plato and Aristotle commanded the bowmen; Herodotus and Livy the foot; Hippocrates, the dragoons; the allies, led by Vossius and Temple, brought up the rear.

All things violently tending to a decisive battle, Fame, who much frequented, and had a large apartment formerly assigned her in the Regal Library, fled up straight to Jupiter, to whom she delivered a faithful account of all that passed between the two parties below; for among the gods she always tells truth. Jove, in great concern, convokes a council in the Milky Way. The senate assembled, he declares the occasion of convening them; a bloody battle just impendent between two mighty armies of ancient and modern creatures, called books, wherein the celestial interest was but too deeply concerned. Momus, the patron of the Moderns, made an excellent speech in their favour, which was answered by Pallas, the protectress of the Ancients. The assembly was divided in their affections; when Jupiter commanded the Book of Fate to be laid before him. Immediately were brought by Mercury three large volumes in folio, containing memoirs of all things past, present, and to come. The clasps were of silver double gilt, the covers of celestial turkey-leather, and the paper such as here on earth might pass almost for vellum. Jupiter, having silently read the decree, would communicate the import to none, but presently shut up the book.

Without the doors of this assembly there attended a vast number of light, nimble gods, menial servants to Jupiter: these are his ministering instruments in all affairs below. They travel in a cara-

[10] soldiers' servants, camp-followers.

van, more or less together, and are fastened to each other like a link of galley-slaves, by a light chain, which passes from them to Jupiter's great toe: and yet, in receiving or delivering a message, they may never approach above the lowest step of his throne, where he and they whisper to each other through a large hollow trunk.[11] These deities are called by mortal men accidents or events; but the gods call them second causes. Jupiter having delivered his message to a certain number of these divinities, they flew immediately down to the pinnacle of the Regal Library, and consulting a few minutes, entered unseen, and disposed the parties according to their orders.

Meanwhile Momus, fearing the worst, and calling to mind an ancient prophecy which bore no very good face to his children the Moderns, bent his flight to the region of a malignant deity called Criticism. She dwelt on the top of a snowy mountain in Nova Zembla; there Momus found her extended in her den, upon the spoils of numberless volumes, half devoured. At her right hand sat Ignorance, her father and husband, blind with age; at her left, Pride, her mother, dressing her up in the scraps of paper herself had torn. There was Opinion, her sister, light of foot, hood-winked, and headstrong, yet giddy, and perpetually turning. About her played her children, Noise and Impudence, Dulness and Vanity, Positiveness, Pedantry and Ill-manners. The goddess herself had claws like a cat; her head, and ears, and voice resembled those of an ass; her teeth fallen out before, her eyes turned inward, as if she looked only upon herself; her diet was the overflowing of her own gall; her spleen was so large as to stand prominent, like a dug of the first rate; nor wanted excrescencies in form of teats, at which a crew of ugly monsters were greedily suckling; and, what is wonderful to conceive, the bulk of spleen increased faster than the sucking could diminish it. "Goddess," said Momus, "can you sit idly here while our devout worshippers, the Moderns, are this minute entering into a cruel battle, and perhaps now lying under the swords of their enemies?

[11] tube.

who then hereafter will ever sacrifice or build altars to our divinities? Haste, therefore, to the British Isle, and, if possible, prevent their destruction; while I make factions among the gods, and gain them over to our party."

Momus, having thus delivered himself, stayed not for an answer, but left the goddess to her own resentment. Up she rose in a rage, and, as it is the form on such occasions, began a soliloquy: "It is I" (said she) "who give wisdom to infants and idiots; by me children grow wiser than their parents, by me beaux become politicians, and schoolboys judges of philosophy; by me sophisters debate and conclude upon the depths of knowledge; and coffee-house wits, instinct by me, can correct an author's style, and display his minutest errours, without understanding a syllable of his matter or his language; by me striplings spend their judgment, as they do their estate, before it comes into their hands. It is I who have deposed wit and knowledge from their empire over poetry, and advanced myself in their stead. And shall a few upstart Ancients dare to oppose me? — But come, my aged parent, and you, my children dear, and thou, my beauteous sister; let us ascend my chariot, and haste to assist our devout Moderns, who are now sacrificing to us a hecatomb, as I perceive by that grateful smell which from thence reaches my nostrils."

The goddess and her train, having mounted the chariot, which was drawn by tame geese, flew over infinite regions, shedding her influence in due places, till at length she arrived at her beloved island of Britain; but in hovering over its metropolis, what blessings did she not let fall upon her seminaries of Gresham and Covent-garden! And now she reached the fatal plain of St. James's Library, at what time the two armies were upon the point to engage; where, entering with all her caravan unseen, and landing upon a case of shelves, now desert, but once inhabited by a colony of virtuosoes, she stayed awhile to observe the posture of both armies.

But here the tender cares of a mother began to fill her thoughts and move in her breast: for at the head of a troop of Modern

bowmen she cast her eyes upon her son Wotton, to whom the fates had assigned a very short thread. Wotton, a young hero, whom an unknown father of mortal race begot by stolen embraces with this goddess. He was the darling of his mother above all her children, and she resolved to go and comfort him. But first, according to the good old custom of deities, she cast about to change her shape, for fear the divinity of her countenance might dazzle his mortal sight and overcharge the rest of his senses. She therefore gathered up her person into an octavo compass: her body grew white and arid, and split in pieces with dryness; the thick turned into pasteboard, and the thin into paper; upon which her parents and children artfully strewed a black juice, or decoction of gall and soot, in form of letters: her head, and voice, and spleen, kept their primitive form; and that which before was a cover of skin did still continue so. In this guise she marched on towards the Moderns, undistinguishable in shape and dress from the divine Bentley, Wotton's dearest friend. "Brave Wotton," said the goddess, "why do our troops stand idle here, to spend their present vigour and opportunity of the day? away, let us haste to the generals, and advise to give the onset immediately." Having spoke thus, she took the ugliest of her monsters, full glutted from her spleen, and flung it invisibly into his mouth, which, flying straight up into his head, squeezed out his eye-balls, gave him a distorted look, and half overturned his brain. Then she privately ordered two of her beloved children, Dulness and Ill-manners, closely to attend his person in all encounters. Having thus accoutred him, she vanished in a mist, and the hero perceived it was the goddess his mother.

The destined hour of fate being now arrived, the fight began; whereof, before I dare adventure to make a particular description, I must, after the example of other authors, petition for a hundred tongues, and mouths, and hands, and pens, which would all be too little to perform so immense a work. Say, goddess, that presidest over History, who it was that first advanced in the field of battle! Paracelsus, at the head of his dragoons, observing Galen

in the adverse wing, darted his javelin with a mighty force, which the brave Ancient received upon his shield, the point breaking in the second fold. . . . . *Hic pauca* . . . . . *desunt.*[12]

They bore the wounded *aga* on their shields to his chariot . . *Desunt* . . . . . *nonnulla.*[13] . . . . . .

Then Aristotle, observing Bacon advance with a furious mien, drew his bow to the head, and let fly his arrow, which missed the valiant Modern and went whizzing over his head; but Descartes it hit; the steel point quickly found a defect in his head-piece; it pierced the leather and the pasteboard, and went in at his right eye. The torture of the pain whirled the valiant bowman round till death, like a star of superior influence, drew him into his own vortex. *Ingens hiatus* . . . . . *hic in MS.*[14] . . . . . when Homer appeared at the head of the cavalry, mounted on a furious horse, with difficulty managed by the rider himself, but which no other mortal durst approach; he rode among the enemy's ranks, and bore down all before him. Say, goddess, whom he slew first and whom he slew last! First, Gondibert[15] advanced against him, clad in heavy armour and mounted on a staid sober gelding, not so famed for his speed as his docility in kneeling whenever his rider would mount or alight. He had made a vow to Pallas that he would never leave the field till he had spoiled Homer of his armour: madman, who had never once seen the wearer, nor understood his strength! Him Homer overthrew, horse and man, to the ground, there to be trampled and choked in the dirt. Then with a long spear he slew Denham, a stout Modern, who from his father's side derived his lineage from Apollo, but his mother was of mortal race. He fell, and bit the earth. The celestial part Apollo took, and made it a star; but the terrestrial lay wallowing upon the ground. Then Homer slew

[12] *Here a little is wanting.*
[13] *Something is wanting.*
[14] *Here is a great gap in the MS.*
[15] Sir William Davenant, author of "Gondibert."

Sam Wesley[16] with a kick of his horse's heel; he took Perrault by mighty force out of his saddle, then hurled him at Fontenelle, with the same blow dashing out both their brains.

On the left wing of the horse Virgil appeared, in shining armour, completely fitted to his body; he was mounted on a dapple-grey steed, the slowness of whose pace was an effect of the hightest mettle and vigour. He cast his eye on the adverse wing, with a desire to find an object worthy of his valour, when behold upon a sorrel gelding of a monstrous size appeared a foe issuing from among the thickest of the enemy's squadrons; but his speed was less than his noise; for his horse, old and lean, spent the dregs of his strength in a high trot, which, though it made slow advances, yet caused a loud clashing of his armour, terrible to hear. The two cavaliers had now approached within the throw of a lance, when the stranger desired a parley, and, lifting up the vizor of his helmet, a face hardly appeared from within which, after a pause, was known for that of the renowned Dryden. The brave Ancient suddenly started, as one possessed with surprise and disappointment together; for the helmet was nine times too large for the head, which appeared situate far in the hinder part, even like the lady in a lobster, or like a mouse under a canopy of state, or like a shrivelled beau from within the penthouse of a modern periwig; and the voice was suited to the visage, sounding weak and remote. Dryden, in a long harangue, soothed up the good Ancient; called him *Father* and, by a large deduction of genealogies, made it plainly appear that they were nearly related. Then he humbly proposed an exchange of armour, as a lasting mark of hospitality between them. Virgil consented (for the goddess Diffidence came unseen, and cast a mist before his eyes), though his was of gold and cost a hundred beeves, the other's but of rusty iron. However, this glittering armour became the Modern yet worse than his own. Then they agreed to exchange horses; but, when

[16] Father of John Wesley. He was known as a minor writer, but had published little at this time.

it came to the trial, Dryden was afraid and utterly unable to mount. . . . . *Alter hiatus*
. . . . . *in MS.*[17]

Lucan appeared upon a fiery horse of admirable shape, but headstrong, bearing the rider where he list over the field; he made a mighty slaughter among the enemy's horse; which destruction to stop, Blackmore, a famous Modern (but one of the mercenaries), strenuously opposed himself, and darted his javelin with a strong hand, which, falling short of its mark, struck deep in the earth. Then Lucan threw a lance; but Æsculapius came unseen and turned off the point. "Brave Modern," said Lucan, "I perceive some god protects you, for never did my arm so deceive me before: but what mortal can contend with a god? Therefore, let us fight no longer, but present gifts to each other." Lucan then bestowed on the Modern a pair of spurs, and Blackmore gave Lucan a bridle. . . . . .
Pauca desunt.[18] . . . . . .
. . . . . .

Creech: but the goddess Dulness took a cloud, formed into the shape of Horace, armed and mounted, and placed in a flying posture before him. Glad was the cavalier to begin a combat with a flying foe, and pursued the image, threatening aloud; till at last it led him to the peaceful bower of his father, Ogleby, by whom he was disarmed and assigned to his repose.

Then Pindar slew —, and —, and Oldham, and —, and Afra[19] the Amazon, light of foot; never advancing in a direct line, but wheeling with incredible agility and force, he made a terrible slaughter among the enemy's light-horse. Him when Cowley observed, his generous heart burnt within him, and he advanced against the fierce Ancient, imitating his address, his pace, and career, as well as the vigour of his horse and his own skill would allow. When the two cavaliers had approached within the length of three javelins, first Cowley threw a lance, which missed Pindar,

[17] *Another gap in the MS.*
[18] *A little is wanting.*
[19] Mrs. Aphra Behn, writer of dramas and tales.

and, passing into the enemy's ranks, fell ineffectual to the ground. Then Pindar darted a javelin so large and weighty, that scarce a dozen cavaliers, as cavaliers are in our degenerate days, could raise it from the ground; yet he threw it with ease, and it went, by an unerring hand, singing through the air; nor could the Modern have avoided present death if he had not luckily opposed the shield that had been given him by Venus. And now both heroes drew their swords; but the Modern was so aghast and disordered that he knew not where he was; his shield dropped from his hands; thrice he fled, and thrice he could not escape. At last he turned, and lifting up his hand in the posture of a suppliant, "Godlike Pindar," said he, "spare my life, and possess my horse, with these arms, beside the ransom which my friends will give when they hear I am alive and your prisoner." "Dog!" said Pindar, "let your ransom stay with your friends; but your carcase shall be left for the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field." With that he raised his sword, and, with a mighty stroke, cleft the wretched Modern in twain, the sword pursuing the blow; and one half lay panting on the ground, to be trod in pieces by the horses' feet; the other half was borne by the frightened steed through the field. This Venus took, washed it seven times in ambrosia, then struck it thrice with a sprig of amaranth; upon which the leather grew round and soft, and the leaves turned into feathers, and, being gilded before, continued gilded still; so it became a dove, and she harnessed it to her chariot.

. . . . . *Hiatus valde de-*
. . . . . *flendus in MS.*[20]

[20] *A gap in the MS. very much to be lamented.*

The Episode of Bentley and Wotton.[21]

Day being far spent, and the numerous forces of the Moderns half inclining to a retreat, there issued forth, from a squadron of their heavy-armed foot, a captain whose name was Bentley, the most deformed of all the Moderns; tall, but without shape or comeliness; large, but without strength or proportion. His armour was patched up of a thousand incoherent pieces, and the sound of it, as he marched, was loud and dry, like that made by the fall of a sheet of lead, which an Etesian wind blows suddenly down from the roof of some steeple. His helmet was of old rusty iron, but the vizor was brass, which, tainted by his breath, corrupted into copperas, nor wanted gall from the same fountain, so that, whenever provoked by anger or labour, an atramentous quality, of most malignant nature, was seen to distil from his lips. In his right hand he grasped a flail, and (that he might never be unprovided of an offensive weapon) a vessel full of [refuse] in his left. Thus completely armed, he advanced with a slow and heavy pace where the Modern chiefs were holding a consult upon the sum of things, who, as he came onwards, laughed to behold his crooked leg and humped shoulder, which his boot and armour, vainly endeavouring to hide, were forced to comply with and expose. The generals made use of him for his talents of railing, which, kept within government, proved frequently of great service to their cause, but, at other times, did more mischief than good; for, at the least touch of offence, and often without any at all, he would, like a wounded elephant, convert it against his leaders. Such, at this juncture, was the disposition of Bentley, grieved to see the enemy prevail, and dissatisfied with everybody's conduct but his own. He humbly gave the Modern generals to understand that he conceived, with great submission, they were all a pack of rogues, and fools, . . . and confounded logger-heads, and illiterate

[21] William Wotton, author of "Reflections on Ancient and Modern Learning" (1694), to the second edition of which (1697) was appended the first edition of Bentley's "Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris."

whelps, and nonsensical scoundrels: that, if himself had been constituted general, those presumptuous dogs, the Ancients, would long before this have been beaten out of the field. "You," said he, "sit here idle, but when I, or any other valiant Modern kill an enemy, you are sure to seize the spoil. But I will not march one foot against the foe till you all swear to me that whomever I take or kill, his arms I shall quietly possess." Bentley having spoken thus, Scaliger, bestowing him a sour look, "Miscreant prater!" said he, "eloquent only in thine own eyes, thou railest without wit, or truth, or discretion. The malignity of thy temper perverteth nature; thy learning makes thee more barbarous; thy study of humanity more inhuman; thy converse among poets more groveling, miry, and dull. All arts of civilizing others render thee rude and untractable; courts have taught thee ill manners, and polite conversation has finished thee a pedant. Besides, a greater coward burdeneth not the army. But never despond; I pass my word, whatever spoil thou takest shall certainly be thy own; though I hope that vile carcase will first become a prey to kites and worms."

Bentley durst not reply, but, half choked with spleen and rage, withdrew, in full resolution of performing some great achievement. With him, for his aid and companion, he took his beloved Wotton, resolving by policy or surprise to attempt some neglected quarter of the ancient's army. They began their march over carcases of their slaughtered friends; then to the right of their own forces; then wheeled northward, till they came to Aldrovandus's tomb, which they passed on the side of the declining sun. And now they arrived, with fear, toward the enemy's outguards, looking about, if haply they might spy the quarters of the wounded, or some straggling sleepers, unarmed and remote from the rest. As when two mongrel curs, whom native greediness and domestic want provoke and join in partnership, though fearful, nightly to invade the fold of some rich grazier, they, with tails depressed and lolling tongues, creep soft and slow. Meanwhile the conscious moon, now in her zenith, on their guilty heads darts perpendic-

ular rays; nor dare they bark, though much provoked at her refulgent visage, whether seen in puddle by reflection or in sphere direct; but one surveys the region round, while the other scouts the plain, if haply to discover, at distance from the flock, some carcase half devoured, the refuse of gorged wolves or ominous ravens. So marched this lovely, loving pair of friends, nor with less fear and circumspection, when at a distance they might perceive two shining suits of armour hanging upon an oak, and the owners not far off in a profound sleep. The two friends drew lots, and the pursuing of this adventure fell to Bentley; on he went, and in his van Confusion and Amaze, while Horrour and Affright brought up the rear. As he came near, behold two heroes of the Ancients' army, Phalaris and Æsop, lay fast asleep. Bentley would fain have despatched them both, and, stealing close, aimed his flail at Phalaris's breast; but then the goddess Affright, interposing, caught the Modern in her icy arms, and dragged him from the danger she foresaw; both the dormant heroes happened to turn at the same instant, though soundly sleeping, and busy in a dream. For Phalaris was just that minute dreaming how a most vile poetaster had lampooned him, and how he had got him roaring in his bull. And Æsop dreamed that, as he and the Ancient chiefs were lying on the ground, a wild ass broke loose, ran about, trampling and kicking in their faces. Bentley, leaving the two heroes asleep, seized on both their armours, and withdrew in quest of his darling Wotton.

He, in the meantime, had wandered long in search of some enterprise, till at length he arrived at a small rivulet that issued from a fountain hard by, called, in the language of mortal men, Helicon. Here he stopped, and, parched with thirst, resolved to allay it in this limpid stream. Thrice with profane hands he essayed to raise the water to his lips, and thrice it slipped all through his fingers. Then he stooped prone on his breast, but, ere his mouth had kissed the liquid crystal, Apollo came, and in the channel held his shield betwixt the Modern and the fountain, so that he drew up nothing but mud. For, although no fountain

on earth can compare with the clearness of Helicon, yet there lies at bottom a thick sediment of slime and mud; for so Apollo begged of Jupiter, as a punishment to those who durst attempt to taste it with unhallowed lips, and for a lesson to all not to draw too deep or far from the spring.

At the fountain-head Wotton discerned two heroes; the one he could not distinguish, but the other was soon known for Temple, general of the allies to the Ancients. His back was turned, and he was employed in drinking large draughts in his helmet from the fountain, where he had withdrawn himself to rest from the toils of the war. Wotton, observing him, with quaking knees and trembling hands, spoke thus to himself: "O that I could kill this destroyer of our army, what renown should I purchase among the chiefs! but to issue out against him, man against man, shield against shield, and lance against lance, what Modern of us dare? for he fights like a god, and Pallas or Apollo are ever at his elbow. But, O mother! if what Fame reports be true, that I am the son of so great a goddess, grant me to hit Temple with this lance, that the stroke may send him to Hell, and that I may return in safety and triumph, laden with his spoils." The first part of this prayer the gods granted at the intercession of his mother and of Momus; but the rest, by a perverse wind sent from Fate, was scattered in the air. Then Wotton grasped his lance, and, brandishing it thrice over his head, darted it with all his might, the goddess, his mother, at the same time adding strength to his arm. Away the lance went hizzing, and reached even to the belt of the averted Ancient, upon which, lightly grazing, it fell to the ground. Temple neither felt the weapon touch him nor heard it fall; and Wotton might have escaped to his army, with the honour of having remitted his lance against so great a leader unrevenged; but Apollo, enraged that a javelin flung by the assistance of so foul a goddess should pollute his fountain, put on the shape of ———, and softly came to young Boyle,[22] who then accompanied

[22] Charles Boyle, editor of the so-called "Epistles of Phalaris" (1695), which gave rise to the Boyle and Bentley Controversy. (See JEBB'S "Life of Bentley," Chaps. V., VI.)

Temple: he pointed first to the lance, then to the distant Modern that flung it, and commanded the young hero to take immediate revenge. Boyle, clad in a suit of armour, which had been given him by all the gods, immediately advanced against the trembling foe, who now fled before him. As a young lion in the Libyan plains, or Araby desert, sent by his aged sire to hunt for prey, or health, or exercise, he scours along, wishing to meet some tiger from the mountains, or a furious boar; if chance a wild ass, with brayings importune, affronts his ear, the generous beast, though loathing to distain his claws with blood so vile, yet, much provoked at the offensive noise, which Echo, foolish nymph, like her ill-judging sex, repeats much louder, and with more delight than Philomela's song, he vindicates the honour of the forest, and hunts the noisy long-eared animal. So Wotton fled, so Boyle pursued. But Wotton, heavy-armed, and slow of foot, began to slack his course, when his lover Bentley appeared, returning laden with the spoils of the two sleeping Ancients. Boyle observed him well, and soon discovering the helmet and shield of Phalaris his friend, both which he had lately with his own hands new polished and gilt, rage sparkled in his eyes, and, leaving his pursuit after Wotton, he furiously rushed on against this new approacher. Fain would he be revenged on both; but both now fled different ways: and, as a woman in a little house that gets a painful livelihood by spinning, if chance her geese be scattered o'er the common, she courses round the plain from side to side, compelling here and there the stragglers to the flock; they cackle loud, and flutter o'er the champaign; so Boyle pursued, so fled this pair of friends: finding at length their flight was vain, they bravely joined, and drew themselves in phalanx. First Bentley threw a spear with all his force, hoping to pierce the enemy's breast; but Pallas came unseen, and in the air took off the point, and clapped on one of lead, which, after a dead bang against the enemy's shield, fell blunted to the ground. Then Boyle, observing well his time, took up a lance of wondrous length and sharpness; and, as this pair of friends compacted stood close side by side, he wheeled

him to the right, and, with unusual force, darted the weapon. Bentley saw his fate approach, and flanking down his arms close to his ribs, hoping to save his body, in went the point, passing through arm and side, nor stopped or spent its force till it had also pierced the valiant Wotton, who, going to sustain his dying friend, shared his fate. As when a skilful cook has trussed a brace of woodcocks, he with iron skewer pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinioned to the ribs; so was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell, joined in their lives, joined in their deaths; so closely joined that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare. Farewell, beloved, loving pair; few equals have you left behind: and happy and immortal shall you be, if all my wit and eloquence can make you.

And now . . . . . .

Desunt cætera.[23]

[23] *The rest is wanting.*

XV.

JOSEPH ADDISON.

(1672–1719.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE SPECTATOR.

I. The Coverley Papers.

[Written in 1711–12.]

No. 34. Monday, April 9, 1711.

The club of which I am a member, is very luckily composed of such persons as are engaged in different ways of life, and deputed as it were out of the most conspicuous classes of mankind. By this means I am furnished with the greatest variety of hints and materials, and know everything that passes in the different quarters and divisions, not only of this great city, but of the whole kingdom. My readers, too, have the satisfaction to find that there is no rank or degree among them who have not their representative in this club, and that there is always somebody present who will take care of their respective interests, that nothing may be written or published to the prejudice or infringement of their just rights and privileges.

I last night sat very late in company with this select body of friends, who entertained me with several remarks which they and others had made upon these my speculations, as also with the various success which they had met with among their several ranks and degrees of readers. Will Honeycomb told me, in the softest manner he could, that there were some ladies, but for your comfort, says Will, they are not those of the most wit, that were offended with the liberties I had taken with the opera and the puppet-show; that some of them were likewise very much sur-

prised that I should think such serious points as the dress and equipage of persons of quality proper subjects for raillery.

He was going on, when Sir Andrew Freeport took him up short, and told him that the papers he hinted at had done great good in the city, and that all their wives and daughters were the better for them; and further added that the whole city thought themselves very much obliged to me for declaring my generous intentions to scourge vice and folly as they appear in a multitude, without condescending to be a publisher of particular intrigues. . . . 'In short,' says Sir Andrew, 'if you avoid that foolish beaten road of falling upon aldermen and citizens, and employ your pen upon the vanity and luxury of courts, your paper must needs be of general use.'

Upon this my friend the Templar told Sir Andrew that he wondered to hear a man of his sense talk after that manner; that the city had always been the province for satire; and that the wits of King Charles's time jested upon nothing else during his whole reign. He then showed, by the examples of Horace, Juvenal, Boileau, and the best writers of every age, that the follies of the stage and court had never been accounted too sacred for ridicule, how great soever the persons might be that patronized them. 'But after all,' says he, 'I think your raillery has made too great an excursion, in attacking several persons of the inns of court; and I do not believe you can show me any precedent for your behaviour in that particular.'

My good friend Sir Roger de Coverley, who had said nothing all this while, began his speech with a pish! and told us, that he wondered to see so many men of sense so very serious upon fooleries. 'Let our good friend,' says he, 'attack every one that deserves it; I would only advise you, Mr. Spectator,' applying himself to me, 'to take care how you meddle with country 'squires. They are the ornaments of the English nation; men of good heads and sound bodies! and let me tell you, some of them take it ill of you, that you mention fox-hunters with so little respect.'

Captain Sentry spoke very sparingly on this occasion. What he said was only to commend my prudence in not touching upon

the army, and advised me to continue to act discreetly in that point.

By this time I found every subject of my speculations was taken away from me by one or other of the club: and began to think myself in the condition of the good man that had one wife who took a dislike to his gray hairs, and another to his black, till by their picking out what each of them had an aversion to, they left his head altogether bald and naked.

While I was thus musing with myself, my worthy friend the clergyman, who, very luckily for me, was at the club that night, undertook my cause. He told us, that he wondered any order of persons should think themselves too considerable to be advised. That it was not quality, but innocence, which exempted men from reproof. That vice and folly ought to be attacked wherever they could be met with, and especially when they were placed in high and conspicuous stations of life. He further added that my paper would only serve to aggravate the pains of poverty, if it chiefly exposed those who are already depressed, and in some measure turned into ridicule, by the meanness of their conditions and circumstances. He afterwards proceeded to take notice of the great use this paper might be of to the public, by reprehending those vices which are too trivial for the chastisement of the law, and too fantastical for the cognizance of the pulpit. He then advised me to prosecute my undertaking with cheerfulness, and assured me that whoever might be displeased with me, I should be approved by all those whose praises do honour to the persons on whom they are bestowed.

The whole club pay a particular deference to the discourse of this gentleman, and are drawn into what he says, as much by the candid ingenuous manner with which he delivers himself, as by the strength of argument and force of reason which he makes use of. Will Honeycomb immediately agreed that what he had said was right; and that, for his part, he would not insist upon the quarter which he had demanded for the ladies. Sir Andrew gave up the city with the same frankness. The Templar would not

stand out and was followed by Sir Roger and the Captain; who all agreed that I should be at liberty to carry the war into what quarter I pleased; provided I continued to combat with criminals in a body, and to assault the vice without hurting the person.

This debate, which was held for the good of mankind, put me in mind of that which the Roman triumvirate were formerly engaged in for their destruction. Every man at first stood hard for his friend, till they found that by this means they should spoil their proscription; and at length, making a sacrifice of all their acquaintance and relations, furnished out a very decent execution.

Having thus taken my resolutions to march on boldly in the cause of virtue and good sense, and to annoy their adversaries in whatever degree or rank of men they may be found; I shall be deaf for the future to all the remonstrances that shall be made to me on this account. If Punch grows extravagant, I shall reprimand him very freely. If the stage becomes a nursery of folly and impertinence, I shall not be afraid to animadvert upon it. In short, if I meet with anything in city, court, or country, that shocks modesty or good manners, I shall use my utmost endeavours to make an example of it. I must, however, entreat every particular person, who does me the honour to be a reader of this paper, never to think himself or any one of his friends or enemies, aimed at in what is said: for I promise him, never to draw a faulty character which does not fit at least a thousand people; or to publish a single paper, that is not written in the spirit of benevolence, and with a love to mankind.

No. 106. MONDAY, July 2, 1711.

Having often received an invitation from my friend Sir Roger de Coverley to pass away a month with him in the country, I last week accompanied him thither, and am settled with him for some time at his country-house, where I intend to form several of my ensuing speculations. Sir Roger, who is very well acquainted with my humour, lets me rise and go to bed when I please, dine at his

own table or in my chamber as I think fit, sit still and say nothing without bidding me be merry. When the gentlemen of the country come to see him, he only shows me at a distance. As I have been walking in his fields I have observed them stealing a sight of me over a hedge, and have heard the knight desiring them not to let me see them, for that I hated to be stared at.

I am the more at ease in Sir Roger's family, because it consists of sober and staid persons; for as the knight is the best master in the world, he seldom changes his servants; and as he is beloved by all about him, his servants never care for leaving him: by this means his domestics are all in years, and grown old with their master. You would take his valet de chambre for his brother, his butler is gray-headed, his groom is one of the gravest men that I have ever seen, and his coachman has the looks of a privy-counsellor. You see the goodness of the master even in the old house-dog, and in a gray pad[1] that is kept in the stable with great care and tenderness out of regard to his past services, though he has been useless for several years.

I could not but observe with a great deal of pleasure the joy that appeared in the countenances of these ancient domestics upon my friend's arrival at his country-seat. Some of them could not refrain from tears at the sight of their old master; every one of them pressed forward to do something for him, and seemed discouraged if they were not employed. At the same time the good old knight, with a mixture of the father and the master of the family, tempered the inquiries after his own affairs with several kind questions relating to themselves. This humanity and good nature engages everybody to him, so that when he is pleasant upon any of them, all his family are in good humour, and none so much as the person whom he diverts himself with: on the contrary, if he coughs, or betrays any infirmity of old age, it is easy for a stander-by to observe a secret concern in the looks of all his servants.

My worthy friend has put me under the particular care of his

[1] an easy-going horse.

butler, who is a very prudent man, and, as well as the rest of his fellow-servants, wonderfully desirous of pleasing me, because they have often heard their master talk of me as of his particular friend.

My chief companion, when Sir Roger is diverting himself in the woods or the fields, is a very venerable man who is ever with Sir Roger, and has lived at his house in the nature of a chaplain above thirty years. This gentleman is a person of good sense and some learning, of a very regular life and obliging conversation: he heartily loves Sir Roger, and knows that he is very much in the old knight's esteem, so that he lives in the family rather as a relation than a dependent.

I have observed in several of my papers, that my friend Sir Roger, amidst all his good qualities, is something of a humourist; and that his virtues, as well as imperfections, are as it were tinged by a certain extravagance, which makes them particularly his, and distinguishes them from those of other men. This cast of mind, as it is generally very innocent in itself, so it renders his conversation highly agreeable, and more delightful than the same degree of sense and virtue would appear in their common and ordinary colours. As I was walking with him last night, he asked me how I liked the good man whom I have just now mentioned? and without staying for my answer told me that he was afraid of being insulted with Latin and Greek at his own table; for which reason he desired a particular friend of his at the university to find him out a clergyman rather of plain sense than much learning, of a good aspect, a clear voice, a sociable temper, and, if possible, a man that understood a little of backgammon. 'My friend,' says Sir Roger, 'found me out this gentleman, who, besides the endowments required of him, is, they tell me, a good scholar, though he does not show it. I have given him the parsonage of the parish; and because I know his value, have settled upon him a good annuity for life. If he outlives me, he shall find that he was higher in my esteem than perhaps he thinks he is. He has now been with me thirty years; and though he does not know I have taken notice of it, has never in all that time asked anything of me

for himself, though he is every day soliciting me for something in behalf of one or other of my tenants, his parishioners. There has not been a lawsuit in the parish since he has lived among them; if any dispute arises they apply themselves to him for the decision; if they do not acquiesce in his judgment, which I think never happened above once or twice at most, they appeal to me. At first settling with me, I made him a present of all the good sermons which have been printed in English, and only begged of him that every Sunday he would pronounce one of them in the pulpit. Accordingly he has digested them into such a series that they follow one another naturally, and make a continued system of practical divinity.'

As Sir Roger was going on in his story, the gentleman we were talking of came up to us; and upon the knight's asking him who preached to-morrow, for it was Saturday night, told us, the bishop of St. Asaph[2] in the morning, and Dr. South in the afternoon. He then showed us his list of preachers for the whole year, where I saw, with a great deal of pleasure, Archbishop Tillotson, Bishop Saunderson, Dr. Barrow, Dr. Calamy, with several living authors who have published discourses of practical divinity. I no sooner saw this venerable man in the pulpit, but I very much approved of my friend's insisting upon the qualifications of a good aspect and a clear voice; for I was so charmed with the gracefulness of his figure and delivery, as well as the discourses he pronounced, that I think I never passed any time more to my satisfaction. A sermon repeated after this manner, is like the composition of a poet in the mouth of a graceful actor.

I could heartily wish that more of our country clergy would follow this example; and instead of wasting their spirits in laborious compositions of their own, would endeavour after a handsome elocution, and all those other talents that are proper to enforce what has been penned by greater masters. This would not only be more easy to themselves, but more edifying to the people.

[2] "Dr. William Fleetwood." — CHALMERS.

No. 112. MONDAY, July 9, 1711.

I am always very well pleased with a country Sunday, and think, if keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could have been thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind. It is certain the country people would soon degenerate into a kind of savages and barbarians, were there not such frequent returns of a stated time, in which the whole village meet together with their best faces, and in their cleanliest habits, to converse with one another upon indifferent subjects, hear their duties explained to them, and join together in adoration of the Supreme Being. Sunday clears away the rust of the whole week, not only as it refreshes in their minds the notions of religion, but as it puts both the sexes upon appearing in their most agreeable forms, and exerting all such qualities as are apt to give them a figure in the eye of the village. A country fellow distinguishes himself as much in the churchyard, as a citizen does upon the 'Change, the whole parish politics being generally discussed in that place either after sermon or before the bell rings.

My friend Sir Roger, being a good churchman, has beautified the inside of his church with several texts of his own choosing. He has likewise given a handsome pulpit-cloth, and railed in the communion-table at his own expense. He has often told me, that at his coming to his estate he found his parishioners very irregular; and that in order to make them kneel and join in the responses, he gave every one of them a hassock and a common-prayer-book; and at the same time employed an itinerant singing master, who goes about the country for that purpose, to instruct them rightly in the tunes of the Psalms; upon which they now very much value themselves, and indeed outdo most of the country churches that I have ever heard.

As Sir Roger is landlord to the whole congregation, he keeps them in very good order, and will suffer nobody to sleep in it besides himself; for if by chance he has been surprised into a short nap at sermon, upon recovering out of it he stands up and looks about him, and if he sees anybody else nodding, either wakes them

himself, or sends his servant to them. Several other of the old knight's particularities break out upon these occasions. Sometimes he will be lengthening out a verse in the singing Psalms half a minute after the rest of the congregation have done with it; sometimes, when he is pleased with the matter of his devotion, he pronounces amen three or four times to the same prayer; and sometimes stands up when everybody else is upon their knees, to count the congregation, or see if any of his tenants are missing.

I was yesterday very much surprised to hear my old friend, in the midst of the service, calling out to one John Matthews to mind what he was about, and not to disturb the congregation. This John Matthews it seems is remarkable for being an idle fellow, and at that time was kicking his heels for his diversion. This authority of the knight, though exerted in that odd manner which accompanies him in all circumstances of life, has a very good effect upon the parish, who are not polite enough to see any thing ridiculous in his behaviour; besides that the general good sense and worthiness of his character make his friends observe these little singularities as foils that rather set off than blemish his good qualities.

As soon as the sermon is finished, nobody presumes to stir till Sir Roger is gone out of the church. The knight walks down from his seat in the chancel between a double row of his tenants, that stand bowing to him on each side; and every now and then inquires how such a one's wife, or mother or son, or father do, whom he does not see at church; which is understood as a secret reprimand to the person that is absent.

The chaplain has often told me, that upon a catechising day, when Sir Roger has been pleased with a boy that answers well, he has ordered a bible to be given him next day for his encouragement; and sometimes accompanies it with a flitch of bacon to his mother. Sir Roger has likewise added five pounds a year to the clerk's place; and that he may encourage the young fellows to make themselves perfect in the church service, has promised, upon the death of the present incumbent, who is very old, to bestow it according to merit.

The fair understanding between Sir Roger and his chaplain, and their mutual concurrence in doing good, is the more remarkable, because the very next village is famous for the differences and contentions that rise between the parson and the 'squire, who live in a perpetual state of war. The parson is always preaching at the 'squire; and the 'squire, to be revenged on the parson, never comes to church.

The 'squire has made all his tenants atheists and tithe-stealers; while the parson instructs them every Sunday in the dignity of his order, and insinuates to them, in almost every sermon, that he is a better man than his patron. In short, matters are come to such an extremity, that the 'squire has not said his prayers either in public or private this half year; and that the parson threatens him, if he does not mend his manners, to pray for him in the face of the whole congregation.

Feuds of this nature, though too frequent in the country, are very fatal to the ordinary people; who are so used to be dazzled with riches, that they pay as much deference to the understanding of a man of an estate, as of a man of learning; and are very hardly brought to regard any truth, how important soever it may be, that is preached to them, when they know there are several men of five hundred a year who do not believe it.

No. 122. FRIDAY, July 20, 1711.

A man's first care should be to avoid the reproaches of his own heart; his next, to escape the censures of the world. If the last interferes with the former, it ought to be entirely neglected; but otherwise there cannot be a greater satisfaction to an honest mind than to see those approbations which it gives itself seconded by the applauses of the public. A man is more sure of his conduct, when the verdict which he passes upon his own behaviour is thus warranted and confirmed by the opinion of all that know him.

My worthy friend Sir Roger is one of those who is not only at peace within himself, but beloved and esteemed by all about him. He receives a suitable tribute for his universal benevolence to

mankind, in the returns of affection and good-will, which are paid him by every one that lives within his neighbourhood. I lately met with two or three odd instances of that general respect which is shown to the good old knight. He would needs carry Will Wimble and myself with him into the country assizes. As we were upon the road Will Wimble joined a couple of plain men who rid before us, and conversed with them for some time; during which my friend Sir Roger acquainted me with their characters.

'The first of them,' says he, 'that has a spaniel by his side, is a yeoman of about a hundred pounds a year, an honest man. He is just within the game-act, and qualified to kill a hare or a pheasant. He knocks down a dinner with a gun twice or thrice a week; and by that means lives much cheaper than those who have not so good an estate as himself. He would be a good neighbour if he did not destroy so many partridges. In short, he is a very sensible man; shoots flying, and has been several times foreman of the petty-jury.

'The other that rides along with him is Tom Touchy, a fellow famous for "taking the law" of everybody. There is not one in the town where he lives that he has not sued at a quarter sessions. The rogue had once the impudence to go to law with the Widow. His head is full of costs, damages, and ejectments. He plagued a couple of honest gentlemen so long for a trespass in breaking one of his hedges, till he was forced to sell the ground it inclosed to defray the charges of the prosecution; his father left him four-score pounds a year; but he has cast and been cast so often, that he is not now worth thirty. I suppose he is going upon the old business of the willow-tree.'

As Sir Roger was giving me this account of Tom Touchy, Will Wimble and his two companions stopped short till we came up to them. After having paid their respects to Sir Roger, Will told him that Mr. Touchy and he must appeal to him upon a dispute that arose between them. Will, it seems, had been giving his fellow-travellers an account of his angling one day in such a hole: when Tom Touchy, instead of hearing out his story, told him that

Mr. Such-a-One, if he pleased, might 'take the law of him,' for fishing in that part of the river. My friend Sir Roger heard them both, upon a round trot; and, after having paused some time, told them, with the air of a man who would not give his judgment rashly, that 'much might be said on both sides.' They were neither of them dissatisfied with the knight's determination, because neither of them found himself in the wrong by it. Upon which we made the best of our way to the assizes.

The court was sat before Sir Roger came; but notwithstanding all the justices had taken their places upon the bench, they made room for the old knight at the head of them; who for his reputation in the country took occasion to whisper in the judge's ear, that he was glad his lordship had met with so much good weather in his circuit. I was listening to the proceedings of the court with much attention, and infinitely pleased with that great appearance of solemnity which so properly accompanies such a public administration of our laws; when, after about an hour's sitting, I observed, to my great surprise, in the midst of a trial, that my friend Sir Roger was getting up to speak. I was in some pain for him, till I found he had acquitted himself of two or three sentences with a look of much business and great intrepidity.

Upon his first rising the court was hushed, and a general whisper ran among the country people that Sir Roger 'was up.' The speech he made was so little to the purpose that I shall not trouble my readers with an account of it; and I believe was not so much designed by the knight himself to inform the court, as to give him a figure in my eye, and keep up his credit in the country.

I was highly delighted, when the court rose, to see the gentlemen of the country gather about my old friend, and striving who should compliment him most; at the same time that the ordinary people gazed upon him at a distance, not a little admiring his courage, that was not afraid to speak to the judge.

In our return home we met with a very odd accident; which I cannot forbear relating, because it shows how desirous all who know Sir Roger are of giving him marks of their esteem. When

we were arrived upon the verge of his estate, we stopped at a little inn to rest ourselves and our horses. The man of the house had, it seems, been formerly a servant in the knight's family; and to do honour to his old master, had some time since, unknown to Sir Roger, put him up in a sign-post before the door; so that the knight's head had hung out upon the road about a week before he himself knew anything of the matter. As soon as Sir Roger was acquainted with it, finding that his servant's indiscretion proceeded wholly from affection and good-will, he only told him that he had made him too high a compliment; and when the fellow seemed to think that could hardly be, added with a more decisive look, that it was too great an honour for any man under a duke; but told him at the same time, that it might be altered with a very few touches, and that he himself would be at the charge of it. Accordingly they got a painter by the knight's directions to add a pair of whiskers to the face, and, by a little aggravation of the features, to change it into the Saracen's Head. I should not have known this story had not the inn-keeper, upon Sir Roger's alighting, told him in my hearing, that his honour's head was brought back last night with the alterations that he had ordered to be made in it. Upon this my friend, with his usual cheerfulness, related the particulars above mentioned, and ordered the head to be brought into the room. I could not forbear discovering greater expressions of mirth than ordinary upon the appearance of this monstrous face, under which, notwithstanding it was made to frown and stare in a most extraordinary manner, I could still discover a distant resemblance of my old friend. Sir Roger, upon seeing me laugh, desired me to tell him truly if I thought it possible for people to know him in that disguise. I at first kept my usual silence; but upon the knight's conjuring me to tell him whether it was not still more like himself than a Saracen, I composed my countenance in the best manner I could, and replied, that 'much might be said on both sides.'

These several adventures, with the knight's behaviour in them, gave me as pleasant a day as ever I met with in any of my travels.

No. 131. TUESDAY, July 31, 1711.

It is usual for a man who loves country sports to preserve the game in his own grounds, and divert himself upon those that belong to his neighbour. My friend Sir Roger generally goes two or three miles from his house, and gets into the frontiers of his estate, before he beats about in search of a hare or partridge, on purpose to spare his own fields, where he is always sure of finding diversion, when the worst comes to the worst. By this means the breed about his house has time to increase and multiply, besides that the sport is more agreeable where the game is the harder to come at, and where it does not lie so thick as to produce any perplexity or confusion in the pursuit. For these reasons the country gentleman, like the fox, seldom preys near his own home.

In the same manner I have made a month's excursion out of the town, which is the great field of game for sportsmen of my species, to try my fortune in the country, where I have started several subjects, and hunted them down, with some pleasure to myself, and I hope to others. I am here forced to use a great deal of diligence before I can spring anything to my mind, whereas in town, whilst I am following one character, it is ten to one but I am crossed in my way by another, and put up such a variety of odd creatures in both sexes, that they foil the scent of one another, and puzzle the chase. My greatest difficulty in the country is to find sport, and in town to choose it. In the mean time, as I have given a whole month's rest to the cities of London and Westminster, I promise myself abundance of new game upon my return thither.

It is indeed high time for me to leave the country, since I find the whole neighbourhood begin to grow very inquisitive after my name and character; my love of solitude, taciturnity, and particular way of life, having raised a great curiosity in all these parts.

The notions which have been framed of me are various; some look upon me as very proud, some as very modest, and some as very melancholy. Will Wimble, as my friend the butler tells me, observing me very much alone, and extremely silent when I am in

company, is afraid I have killed a man. The country people seem to suspect me for a conjurer; and some of them, hearing of the visit which I made to Moll White, will needs have it that Sir Roger has brought down a cunning man with him, to cure the old woman, and free the country from her charms. So that the character which I go under in part of the neighbourhood, is what they here call a White Witch.

A justice of peace, who lives about five miles off, and is not of Sir Roger's party, has it seems said twice or thrice at his table, that he wishes Sir Roger does not harbour a Jesuit in his house, and that he thinks the gentlemen of the country would do very well to make me give some account of myself.

On the other side, some of Sir Roger's friends are afraid the old knight is imposed upon by a designing fellow; and as they have heard that he converses very promiscuously when he is in town, do not know but he has brought down with him some discarded Whig, that is sullen, and says nothing because he is out of place.

Such is the variety of opinions which are here entertained of me, so that I pass among some for a disaffected person, and among others for a popish priest; among some for a wizard, and among others for a murderer; and all this for no other reason that I can imagine, but because I do not hoot, and halloo, and make a noise. It is true, my friend Sir Roger tells them, — 'That it is my way,' and that I am only a philosopher; but this will not satisfy them. They think there is more in me than he discovers, and that I do not hold my tongue for nothing.

For these and other reasons I shall set out for London to-morrow, having found by experience that the country is not a place for a person of my temper, who does not love jollity, and what they call good neighbourhood. A man that is out of humour when an unexpected guest breaks in upon him, and does not care for sacrificing an afternoon to every chance-comer, that will be the master of his own time, and the pursuer of his own inclinations, makes but a very unsociable figure in this kind of life. I shall therefore retire into the town, if I may make use of that phrase,

and get into the crowd again as fast as I can, in order to be alone. I can there raise what speculations I please upon others without being observed myself, and at the same time enjoy all the advantages of company, with all the privileges of solitude. In the mean while, to finish the month, and conclude these my rural speculations, I shall here insert a letter from my friend Will Honeycomb, who has not lived a month for these forty years out of the smoke of London, and rallies me after his way upon my country life.

"DEAR SPEC,

"I suppose this letter will find thee picking of daisies, or smelling to a lock of hay, or passing away thy time in some innocent country diversion of the like nature. I have, however, orders from the club to summon thee up to town, being all of us cursedly afraid thou wilt not be able to relish our company, after thy conversations with Moll White, and Will Wimble. Pr'ythee do not send us up any more stories of a cock and a bull, nor frighten the town with spirits and witches. Thy speculations begin to smell confoundedly of woods and meadows. If thou dost not come up quickly, we shall conclude that thou art in love with one of Sir Roger's dairymaids. Service to the knight. Sir Andrew is grown the cock of the club since he left us, and if he does not return quickly, will make every mother's son of us commonwealth's-men.

"Dear Spec,

"thine eternally,

"WILL HONEYCOMB."

2. THE ENGLISH TONGUE.

No. 135. SATURDAY, August 4, 1711.

I have somewhere read of an eminent person, who used in his private offices of devotion to give thanks to heaven that he was born a Frenchman; for my own part, I look upon it as a peculiar blessing that I was born an Englishman. Among many other

reasons, I think myself very happy in my country, as the language of it is wonderfully adapted to a man who is sparing of his words, and an enemy to loquacity.

As I have frequently reflected on my good fortune in this particular, I shall communicate to the public my speculations upon the English tongue, not doubting but they will be acceptable to all my curious readers.

The English delight in silence more than any other European nation, if the remarks which are made on us by foreigners are true. Our discourse is not kept up in conversation, but falls into more pauses and intervals than in our neighbouring countries; as it is observed, that the matter of our writings is thrown much closer together, and lies in a narrower compass than is usual in the works of foreign authors; for, to favour our natural taciturnity, when we are obliged to utter our thoughts, we do it in the shortest way we are able, and give as quick a birth to our conceptions as possible.

This humour shows itself in several remarks that we may make upon the English language. As first of all by its abounding in monosyllables, which gives us an opportunity of delivering our thoughts in few sounds. This indeed takes off from the elegance of our tongue, but at the same time expresses our ideas in the readiest manner, and consequently answers the first design of speech better than the multitude of syllables, which make the words of other languages more tunable and sonorous. The sounds of our English words are commonly like those of string music, short and transient, which rise and perish upon a single touch; those of other languages are like the notes of wind instruments, sweet and swelling, and lengthened out into variety of modulation.

In the next place we may observe that, where the words are not monosyllables, we often make them so, as much as lies in our power, by our rapidity of pronunciation; as it generally happens in most of our long words which are derived from the Latin, where we contract the length of the syllables that give them a grave and solemn air in their own language, to make them more proper

for despatch, and more conformable to the genius of our tongue. This we may find in a multitude of words, as 'liberty, conspiracy, theatre, orator,' &c.

The same natural aversion to loquacity has of late years made a very considerable alteration in our language, by closing in one syllable the termination of our præter-perfect tense, as in the words 'drown'd, walk'd, arriv'd,' for 'drowned, walked, arrived,' which has very much disfigured the tongue, and turned a tenth part of our smoothest words into so many clusters of consonants. This is the more remarkable, because the want of vowels in our language has been the general complaint of our politest authors, who nevertheless are the men that have made these retrenchments, and consequently very much increased our former scarcity.

This reflection on the words that end in ED, I have heard in conversation from one of the greatest geniuses this age has produced.[3] I think we may add to the foregoing observation, the change which has happened in our language, by the abbreviation of several words that are terminated in 'eth,' by substituting an 's' in the room of the last syllable, as in 'drowns, walks, arrives,' and innumerable other words, which in the pronunciation of our forefathers were 'drowneth, walketh, arriveth.' This has wonderfully multiplied a letter which was before too frequent in the English tongue, and added to that hissing in our language, which is taken so much notice of by foreigners; but at the same time humours our taciturnity, and eases us of many superfluous syllables.

I might here observe that the same single letter on many occasions does the office of a whole word, and represents the 'his' and 'her' of our forefathers. There is no doubt but the ear of a foreigner, which is the best judge in this case, would very much disapprove of such innovations, which indeed we do ourselves in some measure, by retaining the old termination in writing, and in all the solemn offices of our religion.

As in the instances I have given we have epitomized many of

[3] "Probably Dean Swift." — CHALMERS.

our particular words to the detriment of our tongue, so on other occasions we have drawn two words into one, which has likewise very much untuned our language, and clogged it with consonants, as 'mayn't, can't, sha'n't, won't,' and the like, for 'may not, can not, shall not, will not,' &c.

It is perhaps this humour of speaking no more than we needs must, which has so miserably curtailed some of our words that in familiar writings and conversation they often lose all but their first syllables, as in 'mob., rep., pos., incog.' and the like; and as all ridiculous words make their first entry into a language by familiar phrases, I dare not answer for these, that they will not in time be looked upon as a part of our tongue. We see some of our poets have been so indiscreet as to imitate Hudibras's doggerel expressions in their serious compositions, by throwing out the signs of our substantives which are essential to the English language. Nay, this humour of shortening our language had once run so far that some of our celebrated authors, among whom we may reckon Sir Roger L'Estrangé in particular, began to prune their words of all superfluous letters, as they termed them, in order to adjust the spelling to the pronunciation; which would have confounded all our etymologies, and have quite destroyed our tongue.

We may here likewise observe that our proper names, when familiarized in English, generally dwindle to monosyllables, whereas in other modern languages they receive a softer turn on this occasion by the addition of a new syllable. — Nick, in Italian, is Nicolini; Jack, in French, Janot; and so of the rest.

There is another particular in our language which is a great instance of our frugality of words, and that is the suppressing of several particles which must be produced in other tongues to make a sentence intelligible. This often perplexes the best writers, when they find the relatives 'whom, which, or they,' at their mercy, whether they may have admission or not; and will never be decided till we have something like an academy, that by the best authorities and rules drawn from the analogy of languages shall settle all controversies between grammar and idiom.

I have only considered our language as it shows the genius and natural temper of the English, which is modest, thoughtful, and sincere, and which, perhaps, may recommend the people, though it has spoiled the tongue. We might, perhaps, carry the same thought into other languages, and deduce a great part of what is peculiar to them from the genius of the people who speak them. It is certain, the light talkative humour of the French has not a little infected their tongue, which might be shown by many instances; as the genius of the Italians, which is so much addicted to music and ceremony, has moulded all their words and phrases to those particular uses. The stateliness and gravity of the Spaniards shows itself to perfection in the solemnity of their language; and the blunt honest humour of the Germans sounds better in the roughness of the High-Dutch, than it would in a politer tongue.

3. Criticism on Milton's Paradise Lost.

No. 291. Saturday, February 2, 1712.

I have now consider'd *Milton*'s *Paradise Lost* under those four great Heads of the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language; and have shewn that he excels, in general, under each of these Heads. I hope that I have made several Discoveries that [which][4] may appear new, even to those who are versed in Critical Learning. Were I indeed to chuse my Readers, by whose Judgment I would stand or fall, they should not be such as are acquainted only with the *French* and *Italian* Criticks, but also with the Ancient and Moderns who have written in either of the learned Languages. Above all, I would have them well versed in the *Greek* and *Latin* Poets, without which a Man very often fancies that he understands a Critick, when in reality he does not comprehend his Meaning.

It is in Criticism, as in all other Sciences and Speculations; one who brings with him any implicit Notions and Observations which he has made in his reading of the Poets, will find his own Reflec-

[4] "Variations of the second edition." — Arber.

tions methodized and explained, and perhaps several little Hints that had passed in his Mind, perfected and improved in the Works of a good Critick; whereas one who has not these previous Lights, is very often an utter Stranger to what he reads, and apt to put a wrong Interpretation upon it.

Nor is it sufficient, that a Man who sets up for a Judge in Criticism, should have perused the Authors above-mentioned, unless he has also a clear and Logical Head. Without this Talent he is perpetually puzzled and perplexed amidst his own Blunders, mistakes the sense of those he would confute, or if he chances to think right, does not know how to convey his Thoughts to another with Clearness and Perspicuity. *Aristotle*, who was the best Critick, was also one of the best Logicians that ever appeared in the World.

Mr. *Lock*'s Essay on Human Understanding would be thought a very odd Book for a Man to make himself Master of, who would get a Reputation by Critical Writings; though at the same time it is very certain, that an Author who has not learn'd the Art of distinguishing between Words and Things, and of ranging his Thoughts, and setting them in proper Lights, whatever Notions he may have, will lose himself in Confusion and Obscurity. I might further observe, that there is not a *Greek* or *Latin* Critick, who has not shewn, even in the style of his Criticisms, that he was a Master of all the Elegance and Delicacy of his Native Tongue.

The truth of it is, there is nothing more absurd, than for a Man to set up for a Critick, without a good Insight into all the Parts of Learning; whereas many of those who have endeavoured to signalize themselves by Works of this Nature among our *English* Writers, are not only defective in the above-mentioned Particulars, but plainly discover by the Phrases which they make use of, and by their confused way of thinking, that they are not acquainted with the most common and ordinary Systems of Arts and Sciences. A few general Rules extracted out of the *French* Authors, with a certain Cant of Words, has sometimes set up an Illiterate heavy Writer for a most judicious and formidable Critick.

One great Mark, by which you may discover a Critick who has neither Taste nor Learning, is this, that he seldom ventures to praise any Passage in an Author which has not been before received and applauded by the Publick, and that his Criticism turns wholly upon little Faults and Errors. This part of a Critick is so very easie to succeed in, that we find every ordinary Reader, upon the publishing of a new Poem, has Wit and Ill-nature enough to turn several Passages of it into Ridicule, and very often in the right Place. This Mr. *Dryden* has very agreeably remarked in those two celebrated Lines,

Errors, like Straws, upon the Surface flow;
He who would search for Pearls must dive below.

A true Critick ought to dwell rather upon Excellencies than Imperfections, to discover the concealed Beauties of a Writer, and communicate to the World such things as are worth their Observation. The most exquisite Words and finest Strokes of an Author are those which very often appear the most doubtful and exceptionable, to a Man who wants a Relish for polite Learning; and they are these, which a sower [soure] undistinguishing Critick generally attacks with the greatest Violence. *Tully* observes, that it is very easie to brand or fix a Mark upon what he calls *Verbum ardens*, or, as it may be rendered into *English*, a *glowing bold Expression*, and to turn it into Ridicule by a cold, ill-natured Criticism. A little Wit is equally capable of exposing a Beauty, and of aggravating a Fault; and though such a Treatment of an Author naturally produces Indignation in the Mind of an understanding Reader, it has however its effect among the generality of those whose Hands it falls into, the Rabble of Mankind being very apt to think that everything which is laughed at with any mixture of Wit, is ridiculous in it self.

Such a Mirth as this, is always unseasonable in a Critick, as it rather prejudices the Reader than convinces him, and is capable of making a Beauty, as well as a Blemish, the subject of Derision. A Man who cannot write with Wit on a proper Subject, is dull

and stupid, but one who shews it in an improper place, is as impertinent and absurd. Besides, a Man who has the gift of Ridicule is very * [5] apt to find Fault with anything that gives him an Opportunity of exerting his beloved Talent, and very often censures a Passage, not because there is any Fault in it, but because he can be merry upon it. Such kinds of Pleasantry are very unfair and disingenuous in Works of Criticism, in which the greatest Masters, both Ancient and Modern, have always appeared with a serious and instructive Air.

As I intend in my next Paper to show the Defects in *Milton*'s *Paradise Lost*, I thought fit to premise these few Particulars, to the End that the Reader may know I enter upon it, as on a very ungrateful Work, and that I shall just point at the Imperfections, without endeavouring to inflame them with Ridicule. I must also observe with *Longinus*, that the Productions of a great Genius, with many Lapses and Inadvertencies, are infinitely preferable to the Works of an inferior kind of author, which are scrupulously exact and conformable to all the Rules of correct Writing.

I shall conclude my Paper with a Story out of *Boccalini*, which sufficiently shews us the Opinion that Judicious Author entertained of the sort of Criticks I have been here mentioning. A famous Critick, says he, having gathered together all the Faults of an Eminent Poet, made a Present of them to *Apollo*, who received them very graciously, and resolved to make the Author a suitable Return for the Trouble he had been at in collecting them. In order to this, he set before him a Sack of Wheat, as it had been just threshed out of the Sheaf. He then bid him pick out the Chaff from among the Corn, and lay it aside by it self. The Critick applied himself to the Task with great Industry and Pleasure, and after having made the due Separation, was presented by *Apollo* with the Chaff for his Pains.

[5] "Words in the first, omitted in the second edition." —ARBER.

No. 297. SATURDAY, February 9, 1712.

After what I have said in my last *Saturday*'s Paper, I shall enter on the Subject of this without farther Preface, and remark the several Defects which appear in the Fable, the Characters, the Sentiments, and the Language of *Milton*'s *Paradise Lost;* not doubting but the reader will pardon me, if I alledge at the same time whatever may be said for the Extenuation of such Defects. The first Imperfection which I shall observe in the Fable is, that the Event of it is unhappy.

The Fable of every Poem is according to *Aristotle*'s Division either *Simple* or *Implex*.[6] It is called Simple when there is no change of Fortune in it, Implex when the Fortune of the chief Actor changes from Bad to Good, or from Good to Bad. The Implex Fable is thought the most perfect; I suppose, because it is most proper to stir up the Passions of the Reader, and to surprise him with a great variety of Accidents.

The Implex Fable is therefore of two kinds: In the first the chief Actor makes his way through a long Series of Dangers and Difficulties, 'till he arrives at Honour and Prosperity, as we see in the Stories [Story][4] of *Ulysses* and **Æneas*.*[5] In the second, the chief Actor in the Poem falls from some eminent pitch of Honour and Prosperity, into Misery and Disgrace. Thus we see *Adam* and *Eve* sinking from a state of Innocence and Happiness, into the most abject Condition of Sin and Sorrow.

The most taking Tragedies among the Ancients were built on this last sort of Implex Fable, particularly the Tragedy of *Œdipus* which proceeds upon a Story, if we may believe *Aristotle*, the most proper for Tragedy that could be invented by the Wit of Man. I have taken some pains in a former Paper to shew, that this kind of Implex Fable, wherein the Event is unhappy, is more apt to affect an Audience than that of the first kind; notwithstanding many excellent Pieces among the Ancients, as well as most of those which have been written of late Years in our own Country, are raised upon contrary Plans. I must however own, that I

[6] involved.

think this kind of Fable, which is the most perfect in Tragedy, is not so proper for an Heroic Poem.

Milton seems to have been sensible of this Imperfection in his Fable, and has therefore endeavoured to cure it by several Expedients; particularly by the Mortification which the great Adversary of Mankind meets with upon his return to the Assembly of Infernal Spirits, as it is described in that [a] beautiful Passage of the tenth Book; and likewise by the Vision, wherein *Adam* at the close of the Poem sees his Offspring triumphing over his great Enemy, and himself restored to a happier *Paradise* than that from which he fell.

There is another Objection against *Milton*'s Fable, which is indeed almost the same with the former, tho' placed in a different Light, namely, That the Hero in the *Paradise Lost* is unsuccessful, and by no means a Match for his Enemies. This gave occasion to Mr. *Dryden*'s Reflection, that the Devil was in reality *Milton*'s Hero. I think I have obviated this Objection in my first Paper. The *Paradise Lost* is an Epic, [or a] Narrative Poem; he that looks for an Hero in it, searches for that which *Milton* never intended; but if he will needs fix the Name of an Hero upon any Person in it, 'tis certainly the *Messiah* who is the Hero, both in the Principal Action, and in the [chief] Episode [s]. Paganism could not furnish out a real Action for a Fable greater than that of the *Iliad* or *Æneid*, and therefore an Heathen could not form a higher Notion of a Poem than one of that kind, which they call an Heroic. Whether *Milton*'s is not of a greater [sublimer] Nature, I will not presume to determine; it is sufficient that I shew there is in the *Paradise Lost* all the Greatness of Plan, Regularity of Design, and masterly Beauties which we discover in *Homer* and *Virgil*.

I must, in the next Place, observe that *Milton* has interwoven in the Texture of his Fable some Particulars which do not seem to have Probability enough for an Epic Poem, particularly in the Actions which he ascribes to *Sin* and *Death*, and the Picture which he draws of the *Lymbo of Vanity*, with other Passages in

the second Book. Such Allegories rather savour of the Spirit of *Spencer* and *Ariosto*, than of *Homer* and *Virgil*.

In the Structure of his Poem he has likewise admitted of too many Digressions. It is finely observed by *Aristotle*, that the Author of an Historic Poem should seldom speak himself, but throw as much of his Work as he can into the Mouths of those who are his Principal Actors. *Aristotle* has given no Reason for this Precept; but I presume it is because the Mind of the Reader is more awed and elevated when he hears *Æneas* or *Achilles* speak, than when *Virgil* or *Homer* talk in their own Persons. Besides that assuming the Character of an eminent Man is apt to fire the Imagination, and raise the Ideas of the Author. *Tully* tells us, mentioning his Dialogue of Old Age, in which *Cato* is the chief Speaker, that upon a Review of it he was agreeably imposed upon, and fancied that it was *Cato*, and not he himself, who utter'd his Thoughts on that Subject.

If the Reader would be at the pains to see how the Story of the *Iliad* and the *Æneid* is delivered by those Persons who act in it, he will be surprized to find how little in either of these Poems proceeds from the Authors. *Milton* has, in the general disposition of his Fable, very finely observed this great Rule; insomuch that there is scarce a third part of it which comes from the Poet; the rest is spoken either by *Adam* and *Eve*, or by some Good or Evil Spirit who is engaged either in their Destruction or Defence.

From what has been here observed it appears, that Digressions are by no means to be allowed of in an Epic Poem. If the Poet, even in the ordinary course of his Narration, should speak as little as possible, he should certainly never let his Narration sleep for the sake of any Reflections of his own. I have often observed, with a secret Admiration, that the longest Reflection in the *Æneid* is in that Passage of the Tenth Book, where *Turnus* is represent[ed] as dressing himself in the Spoils of *Pallas*, whom he had Slain. *Virgil* here lets his Fable stand still for the sake of the following Remark. *How is the Mind of Man ignorant of Futurity*,

and unable to bear prosperous Fortune with Moderation? The time will come when Turnus *shall wish that he had left the Body of* Pallas *untouched, and curse the Day on which he dressed himself in these Spoils.*[7] As the great Event of the *Æneid*, and the Death of *Turnus*, whom *Æneas* slew because he saw him adorned with the Spoils of *Pallas*, turns upon this Incident, *Virgil* went out of his way to make this Reflection upon it, without which so small a Circumstance might possibly have slipped out of his Reader's Memory. *Lucan*, who was an Injudicious Poet, lets drop his Story very frequently for the sake of [his] unnecessary Digressions, or his *Diverticula*, as *Scaliger* calls them. If he gives us an Account of the Prodigies which preceded the Civil War, he declaims upon the Occasion, and shews how much happier it would be for Man, if he did not feel his Evil Fortune before it comes to pass, and suffer not only by its real Weight, but by the Apprehension of it. *Milton*'s Complaint of his Blindness, his Panegyrick on Marriage, his Reflections on *Adam* and *Eve*'s going naked, of the Angels eating, and several other Passages in his Poem, are liable to the same Exception, tho' I must confess there is so great a Beauty in these very Digressions, that I would not wish them out of his Poem.

I have, in a former Paper, spoken of the *Characters* of *Milton*'s *Paradise Lost*, and declared my Opinion as to the Allegorical Persons who are introduced in it.

If we look into the *Sentiments*, I think they are sometimes defective under the following Heads; First, as there are some [several] of them too much pointed, and some that degenerate even into Puns. Of this last kind I am afraid is that in the First Book, where, speaking of the Pigmies, he calls them

> . . . *The small* Infantry
> *Warr'd on by Cranes.* . . .

Another Blemish that appears in some of his Thoughts, is his frequent Allusions to Heathen Fables, which are not certainly of

[7] VIRGIL, *Æneid*, X. 501–5.

a Piece with the Divine Subject of which he treats. I do not find fault with these Allusions, where the Poet himself represents them as fabulous, as he does in some Places, but where he mentions them as Truths and Matters of Fact. The Limits of my Paper will not give me leave to be particular in Instances of this kind: The Reader will easily remark them in his Perusal of the Poem.

A Third Fault in his Sentiments, is an unnecessary Ostentation of Learning, which likewise occurs very frequently. It is certain that both *Homer* and *Virgil* were Masters of all the Learning of their Times, but it shews it self in their Works after an indirect and concealed manner. *Milton* seems ambitious of letting us know, by his Excursions on Free-will and Predestination, and his many Glances upon History, Astronomy, Geography and the like, as well as by the Terms and Phrases he sometimes makes use of, that he was acquainted with the whole Circle of Arts and Sciences.

If, in the last place, we consider the *Language* of this great Poet, we must allow what I have hinted in a former Paper, that it is [often] too much laboured, and sometimes obscured by old Words, Transpositions, and Foreign Idioms. *Seneca*'s Objection to the Stile of a great Author, *Riget ejus oratio, nihil in eâ placidum, nihil lene*,[8] is what many Criticks make to *Milton:* as I cannot wholly refute it, so I have already apologized for it in another Paper; to which I may further add, that *Milton*'s Sentiments and Ideas were so wonderfully Sublime, that it would have been impossible for him to have represented them in their full Strength and Beauty, without having recourse to these Foreign Assistances. Our Language sunk under him, and was unequal to that greatness of Soul, which furnished him with such glorious Conceptions.

A second Fault in his Language is, that he often affects a kind of Jingle in his Words, as in the following Passages, and many others:

[8] *His language is stiff; there is nothing in it smooth, nothing gentle.* — SENECA.

And brought into the World *a* World *of woe.*
. . . *Begirt th' Almighty Throne*
Beseeching *or* besieging . . .
This tempted *our* attempt . . .
At one Slight bound *high overleapt all* bound.

I know there are Figures of this kind of Speech, that some of the greatest Ancients have been guilty of it, and that *Aristotle* himself has given it a place in his Rhetorick among the Beauties of that Art. But as it is in itself poor and trifling, it is I think at present universally exploded by all the Masters of polite Writing.

The last Fault which I shall take notice of in *Milton*'s Stile, is the frequent use of what the Learned call *Technical Words*, or Terms of Art. It is one of the great Beauties of Poetry, to make hard things intelligible, and to deliver what is abstruse of it self in such easy Language as may be understood by ordinary Readers: Besides that the Knowledge of a Poet should rather seem born with him, or inspired, than drawn from Books and Systems. I have often wondered how Mr. *Dryden* could translate a Passage of *Virgil* after the following manner:

Tack to the Larboard, and stand off to Sea,
Veer Star-board, Sea and Land. . . .

Milton makes use of *Larboard* in the same manner. When he is upon Building he mentions *Doric Pillars*, *Pilasters*, *Cornice*, *Freeze*, *Architrave*. When he talks of Heavenly Bodies, you meet with *Eccliptick*, and *Eccentric*, the *trepidation*, *Stars dropping from the Zenith*, *Rays culminating from the Equator*. To which might be added many Instances of the like kind in several other Arts and Sciences.

I shall in my next *Saturday*'s * Paper [Papers] give an Account of the many particular Beauties in *Milton*, which would have been too long to insert under those general Heads I have already treated of, and with which I intend to conclude this Piece of Criticism.

XVI.

SIR RICHARD STEELE.

(1675–1729.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE SPECTATOR.

1. The Coverley Papers.

[Written in 1711–12.]

No. 2. FRIDAY, March 2, 1711.

The first of our society is a gentleman of Worcestershire, of an ancient descent, a baronet, his name Sir Roger de Coverley. His great grand-father was inventor of that famous country-dance which is called after him. All who know that shire are very well acquainted with the parts and merits of Sir Roger. He is a gentleman that is very singular in his behaviour, but his singularities proceed from his good sense, and are contradictions to the manners of the world, only as he thinks the world is in the wrong. However, this humour creates him no enemies, for he does nothing with sourness or obstinacy; and his being unconfined to modes and forms, makes him but the readier and more capable to please and oblige all who know him. When he is in town, he lives in Soho-square. It is said, he keeps himself a bachelor by reason he was crossed in love by a perverse beautiful widow of the next county to him. Before this disappointment, Sir Roger was what you call a fine gentleman, had often supped with my Lord Rochester and Sir George Etherege, fought a duel upon his first coming to town, and kicked bully Dawson[1] in a public coffee-house for calling him youngster. But being ill-used by the above-mentioned widow, he was very serious for a year and a half; and,

[1] "A noted sharper, swaggerer, and debauchee about town." — Chalmers.

though, his temper being naturally jovial, he at last got over it, he grew careless of himself, and never dressed afterwards. He continues to wear a coat and doublet of the same cut that were in fashion at the time of his repulse, which, in his merry humours, he tells us, has been in and out twelve times since he first wore it. He is now in his fifty-sixth year, cheerful, gay, and hearty; keeps a good house both in town and country; a great lover of mankind; but there is such a mirthful cast in his behaviour that he is rather beloved than esteemed.

His tenants grow rich, his servants look satisfied, all the young women profess love to him, and the young men are glad of his company. When he comes into a house he calls the servants by their names, and talks all the way up stairs to a visit. I must not omit that Sir Roger is a justice of the quorum; that he fills the chair at a quarter-session with great abilities, and three months ago gained universal applause by explaining a passage in the game-act.

The gentleman next in esteem and authority among us is another bachelor, who is a member of the Inner Temple, a man of great probity, wit, and understanding; but he has chosen his place of residence rather to obey the direction of an old humoursome father than in pursuit of his own inclinations. He was placed there to study the laws of the land, and is the most learned of any of the house in those of the stage. Aristotle and Longinus are much better understood by him than Littleton or Coke. The father sends up every post questions relating to marriage articles, leases and tenures, in the neighbourhood; all which questions he agrees with an attorney to answer and take care of in the lump. He is studying the passions themselves when he should be inquiring into the debates among men which arise from them. He knows the argument of each of the orations of Demosthenes and Tully, but not one case in the reports of our own courts. No one ever took him for a fool; but none, except his intimate friends, know he has a great deal of wit. This turn makes him at once both disinterested and agreeable. As few of

his thoughts are drawn from business, they are most of them fit for conversation. His taste for books is a little too just for the age he lives in; he has read all but approves of very few. His familiarity with the customs, manners, actions, and writings of the ancients, make him a very delicate observer of what occurs to him in the present world. He is an excellent critic, and the time of the play is his hour of business; exactly at five he passes through New Inn, crosses through Russelcourt, and takes a turn at Will's till the play begins; he has his shoes rubbed and his periwig powdered at the barber's as you go into the Rose. It is for the good of the audience when he is at a play, for the actors have an ambition to please him.

The person of next consideration is Sir Andrew Freeport, a merchant of great eminence in the city of London. A person of indefatigable industry, strong reason, and great experience. His notions of trade are noble and generous, and, as every rich man has usually some sly way of jesting, which would make no great figure were he not a rich man, he calls the sea the British Common. He is acquainted with commerce in all its parts, and will tell you that it is a stupid and barbarous way to extend dominion by arms; for true power is to be got by arts and industry. He will often argue, that, if this part of our trade were well cultivated, we should gain from one nation; and if another, from another. I have heard him prove that diligence makes more lasting acquisitions than valour, and that sloth has ruined more nations than the sword. He abounds in several frugal maxims, amongst which the greatest favourite is, 'A penny saved is a penny got.' A general trader of good sense is pleasanter company than a general scholar; and Sir Andrew having a natural unaffected eloquence, the perspicuity of his discourse gives the same pleasure that wit would in another man. He has made his fortunes himself, and says that England may be richer than other kingdoms, by as plain methods as he himself is richer than other men; though at the same time I can say this of him, that there is not a point in the compass, but blows home a ship in which he is an owner.

Next to Sir Andrew in the club-room sits Captain Sentry, a gentleman of great courage, and understanding, but invincible modesty. He is one of those that deserve very well, but are very awkward at putting their talents within the observation of such as should take notice of them. He was some years a captain, and behaved himself with great gallantry in several engagements and at several sieges; but having a small estate of his own, and being next heir to Sir Roger, he has quitted a way of life in which no man can rise suitably to his merit, who is not something of a courtier as well as a soldier. I have heard him often lament that in a profession where merit is placed in so conspicuous a view, impudence should get the better of modesty. When he has talked to this purpose, I never heard him make a sour expression, but frankly confess that he left the world because he was not fit for it. A strict honesty and an even regular behaviour, are in themselves obstacles to him that must press through crowds, who endeavour at the same end with himself, the favour of the commander. He will, however, in his way of talk, excuse generals for not disposing according to men's desert, or inquiring into it; for, says he, that great man who has a mind to help me, has as many to break through to come at me as I have to come at him: therefore he will conclude that the man who would make a figure, especially in a military way, must get over all false modesty, and assist his patron against the importunity of other pretenders, by a proper assurance in his own vindication. He says it is a civil cowardice to be backward in asserting what you ought to expect, as it is a military fear to be slow in attacking when it is your duty. With this candour does the gentleman speak of himself and others. The same frankness runs through all his conversation. The military part of his life has furnished him with many adventures, in the relation of which he is very agreeable to the company; for he is never overbearing, though accustomed to command men in the utmost degree below him, nor ever too obsequious, from a habit of obeying men highly above him.

But that our society may not appear a set of humourists, unac-

quainted with the gallantries and pleasures of the age, we have amongst us the gallant Will Honeycomb, a gentleman who, according to his years, should be in the decline of his life, but having ever been very careful of his person, and always had a very easy fortune, time has made but very little impression, either by wrinkles on his forehead, or traces in his brain. His person is well turned, of a good height. He is very ready at that sort of discourse with which men usually entertain women. He has all his life dressed very well, and remembers habits as others do men. He can smile when one speaks to him, and laughs easily. He knows the history of every mode, and can inform you from which of the French king's wenches our wives and daughters had this manner of curling their hair, that way of placing their hoods; . . . and whose vanity to show her foot made that part of the dress so short in such a year. In a word, all his conversation and knowledge has been in the female world. As other men of his age will take notice to you what such a minister said upon such and such an occasion, he will tell you, when the Duke of Monmouth danced at court, such a woman was then smitten, another was taken with him at the head of his troop in the Park. In all these important relations, he has ever about the same time received a kind glance, or a blow of a fan from some celebrated beauty, mother of the present Lord Such-a-one. If you speak of a young commoner that said a lively thing in the house he starts up, 'He has good blood in his veins, . . . that young fellow's mother used me more like a dog than any woman I ever made advances to.' This way of talking of his, very much enlivens the conversation among us of a more sedate turn; and I find there is not one of the company, but myself, who rarely speak at all, but speaks of him as of that sort of man, who is usually called a well-bred fine gentleman. To conclude his character, where women are not concerned, he is an honest worthy man.

I cannot tell whether I am to account him whom I am next to speak of, as one of our company; for he visits us but seldom, but when he does, it adds to every man else a new enjoyment of him-

self. He is a clergyman, a very philosophic man, of general learning, great sanctity of life, and the most exact good breeding. He has the misfortune to be of a very weak constitution, and consequently cannot accept of such cares and business as preferments in his function would oblige him to; he is therefore among divines what a chamber-counsellor is among lawyers. The probity of his mind, and the integrity of his life, create him followers, as being eloquent or loud advances others. He seldom introduces the subject he speaks upon; but we are so far gone in years, that he observes, when he is among us, an earnestness to have him fall on some divine topic which he always treats with much authority, as one who has no interest in this world, as one who is hastening to the object of all his wishes, and conceives hope from his decays and infirmities. These are my ordinary companions.

No. 107. TUESDAY, July 3, 1711.

The reception, manner of attendance, undisturbed freedom and quiet, which I meet with here in the country, has confirmed me in the opinion I always had, that the general corruption of manners in servants is owing to the conduct of masters. The aspect of every one in the family carries so much satisfaction, that it appears he knows the happy lot which has befallen him in being a member of it. There is one particular which I have seldom seen but at Sir Roger's; it is usual, in all other places, that servants fly from the parts of the house through which their master is passing; on the contrary, here they industriously place themselves in his way: and it is on both sides, as it were, understood as a visit, when the servants appear without calling. This proceeds from the humane and equal temper of the man of the house, who also perfectly well knows how to enjoy a great estate with such economy as ever to be much beforehand. This makes his own mind untroubled, and consequently unapt to vent peevish expressions, or give passionate or inconsistent orders to those about him. Thus respect and love go together; and a certain cheerfulness in performance of their duty is the particular distinction of this lower

part of this family. When a servant is called before his master, he does not come with an expectation to hear himself rated for some trivial fault, threatened to be stripped, or used with any other unbecoming language, which mean masters often give to worthy servants; but it is often to know what road he took that he came so readily back according to order; whether he passed by such a ground; if the old man who rents it is in good health; or whether he gave Sir Roger's love to him, or the like.

A man who preserves a respect founded on his benevolence to his dependents, lives rather like a prince than a master in his family; his orders are received as favours rather than duties, and the distinction of approaching him is part of the reward for executing what is commanded by him.

There is another circumstance in which my friend excels in his management, which is the manner of rewarding his servants. He has ever been of opinion that giving his cast clothes to be worn by valets has a very ill effect upon little minds, and creates a silly sense of equality between the parties, in persons affected only with outward things. I have heard him often pleasant on this occasion, and describe a young gentleman abusing his man in that coat, which a month or two before was the most pleasing distinction he was conscious of in himself. He would turn his discourse still more pleasantly upon the ladies' bounties in this kind, and I have heard him say he knew a fine woman who distributed rewards and punishments in giving becoming or unbecoming dresses to her maids.

But my good friend is above these little instances of good-will in bestowing only trifles on his servants; a good servant to him is sure of having it in his choice very soon of being no servant at all. As I before observed, he is so good a husband, and knows so thoroughly that the skill of the purse is the cardinal virtue of this life; I say he knows so well that frugality is the support of generosity, that he can often spare a large fine when a tenement falls, and give that settlement to a good servant who has a mind to go into the world, or make a stranger pay the fine to that

servant, for his more comfortable maintenance, if he stays in his service.

A man of honour and generosity considers it would be miserable to himself to have no will but that of another, though it were of the best person breathing, and for that reason goes on as fast as he is able to put his servants into independent livelihoods. The greatest part of Sir Roger's estate is tenanted by persons who have served himself or his ancestors. It was to me extremely pleasant to observe the visitants from several parts to welcome his arrival into the country: and all the difference that I could take notice of between the late servants who came to see him, and those who staid in the family, was that these latter were looked upon as fine gentlemen and better courtiers.

This manumission and placing them in a way of livelihood, I look upon as only what is due to a good servant, which encouragement will make his successor be as diligent, as humble, and as ready as he was. There is something wonderful in the narrowness of those minds which can be pleased, and be barren of bounty to those who please them.

One might on this occasion recount the sense that great persons in all ages have had of the merit of their dependents, and the heroic services which men have done their masters in the extremity of their fortunes, and shown to their undone patrons, that fortune was all the difference between them; but as I design this my speculation only as a gentle admonition to thankless masters, I shall not go out of the occurrences of common life, but assert it as a general observation, that I never saw, but in Sir Roger's family and one or two more, good servants treated as they ought to be. Sir Roger's kindness extends to their children's children, and this very morning he sent his coachman's grandson to prentice. I shall conclude this paper with an account of a picture in his gallery, where there are many which will deserve my future observation.

At the very upper end of this handsome structure I saw the portraiture of two young men standing in a river; the one naked,

the other in a livery. The person supported seemed half dead, but still so much alive, as to show in his face exquisite joy and love towards the other. I thought the fainting figure resembled my friend Sir Roger; and looking at the butler who stood by me, for an account of it, he informed me that the person in the livery was a servant of Sir Roger's who stood on the shore while his master was swimming, and observing him taken with some sudden illness, and sink under water, jumped in and saved him. He told me Sir Roger took off the dress he was in as soon as he came home, and by a great bounty at that time, followed by his favour ever since, had made him master of that pretty seat which we saw at a distance as we came to this house. I remembered indeed Sir Roger said there lived a very worthy gentleman, to whom he was highly obliged, without mentioning anything further. Upon my looking a little dissatisfied at some part of the picture, my attendant informed me that it was against Sir Roger's will, and at the earnest request of the gentleman himself, that he was drawn in the habit in which he had saved his master.

No. 109. THURSDAY, July 5, 1711.

I was this morning walking in the gallery, when Sir Roger entered at the end opposite to me, and advancing towards me, said he was glad to meet me among his relations the De Coverley's, and hoped I liked the conversation of so much good company, who were as silent as myself. I knew he alluded to the pictures, and as he is a gentleman who does not a little value himself upon his ancient descent, I expected he would give me some account of them. We were now arrived at the upper end of the gallery, when the knight faced towards one of the pictures, and as we stood before it, he entered into the matter, after his blunt way of saying things as they occur to his imagination, without regular introduction, or care to preserve the appearance of chain of thought.

'It is,' said he, 'worth while to consider the force of dress; and how the persons of one age differ from those of another; merely by that only. One may observe also that the general fashion of

one age has been followed by one particular set of people in another, and by them preserved from one generation to another. Thus the vast jetting coat and small bonnet, which was the habit in Henry the Seventh's time, is kept on in the yeomen of the guard, not without a good and politic view, because they look a foot taller, and a foot and a half broader: besides that the cap leaves the face expanded, and consequently more terrible, and fitter to stand at the entrance of palaces.

'This predecessor of ours you see is dressed after this manner, and his cheeks would be no larger than mine were he in a hat as I am. He was the last man that won a prize in the Tilt-yard, which is now a common street before Whitehall. You see the broken lance that lies there by his right foot. He shivered that lance of his adversary all to pieces; and bearing himself, look you, sir, in this manner, at the same time he came within the target of the gentleman who rode against him, and taking him with incredible force before him on the pommel of his saddle, he in that manner rid the tournament over with an air that showed he did it rather to perform the rule of the lists, than expose his enemy; however it appeared he knew how to make use of a victory, and with a gentle trot he marched up to a gallery where their mistress sat, for they were rivals, and let him down with laudable courtesy and pardonable insolence. I don't know but it might be exactly where the coffee-house is now.

'You are to know this my ancestor was not only of a military genius, but fit also for the arts of peace, for he played on the bass-viol as well as any gentleman at court; you see where his viol hangs by his basket-hilt sword. The action at the Tilt-yard you may be sure won the fair lady, who was a maid of honour, and the greatest beauty of her time; here she stands the next picture. You see, Sir, my great-great-great-grandmother has on the new-fashioned petticoat, except that the modern is gathered at the waist; my grandmother appears as if she stood in a large drum, whereas the ladies now walk as if they were in a go-cart. For all this lady was bred at court, she became an excellent

country wife, she brought ten children; and when I show you the library, you shall see in her own hand, allowing for the difference of the language, the best receipt now in England both for a hasty-pudding and a white-pot.[2]

'If you please to fall back a little, because it is necessary to look at the three next pictures at one view; these are three sisters. She on the right hand who is so very beautiful, died a maid; the next to her, still handsomer, had the same fate, against her will; this homely thing in the middle had both their portions added to her own, and was stolen by a neighbouring gentleman, a man of stratagem and resolution, for he poisoned three mastiffs to come at her, and knocked down two deer-stealers in carrying her off. Misfortunes happen in all families. The theft of this romp, and so much money, was no great matter to our estate. But the next heir that possessed it was this soft gentleman, whom you see there. Observe the small buttons, the little boots, the laces, the slashes about his clothes, and above all the posture he is drawn in, which to be sure was his choosing; you see he sits with one hand on a desk writing and looking as it were another way, like an easy writer, or a sonneteer. He was one of those that had too much wit to know how to live in the world; he was a man of no justice, but great good-manners; he ruined everybody that had anything to do with him, but never said a rude thing in his life; the most indolent person in the world, he would sign a deed that passed away half his estate with his gloves on, but would not put on his hat before a lady if it were to save his country. He is said to be the first that made love by squeezing the hand. He left the estate with ten thousand pounds debt upon it; but however, by all hands, I have been informed that he was every way the finest gentleman in the world. That debt lay heavy on our house for one generation, but it was retrieved by a gift from that honest man you see there, a citizen of our name, but nothing at all akin to us. I know Sir Andrew Freeport has said behind my back, that this man was descended from one of the ten children of the maid of

[2] Defined as a kind of cake baked in a pot.

honour I showed you above; but it was never made out. We winked at the thing indeed, because money was wanting at that time.' Here I saw my friend a little embarrassed, and turned my face to the next portraiture.

Sir Roger went on with his account of the gallery in the following manner: 'This man,' pointing to him I looked at, 'I take to be the honour of our house: Sir Humphrey de Coverley. He was in his dealings as punctual as a tradesman, and as generous as a gentleman. He would have thought himself as much undone by breaking his word, as if it were to be followed by bankruptcy. He served his country as knight of the shire to his dying day. He found it no easy matter to maintain an integrity in his words and actions, even in things that regarded the offices which were incumbent upon him, in the care of his own affairs and relations of life, and therefore dreaded, though he had great talents, to go into employments of state, where he must be exposed to the snares of ambition. Innocence of life and great ability were the distinguishing parts of his character; the latter, he had often observed, had led to the destruction of the former, and he used frequently to lament that great and good had not the same signification. He was an excellent husbandman, but had resolved not to exceed such a degree of wealth; all above it he bestowed in secret bounties many years after the sum he aimed at for his own use was attained. Yet he did not slacken his industry, but to a decent old age spent the life and fortune which was superfluous to himself, in the service of his friends and neighbours.'

Here we were called to dinner, and Sir Roger ended the discourse of this gentleman, by telling me, as we followed the servant, that this his ancestor was a brave man, and narrowly escaped being killed in the civil wars; 'for,' said he, 'he was sent out of the field upon a private message, the day before the battle of Worcester.' The whim of narrowly escaping by having been within a day of danger, with other matters above mentioned, mixed with good sense, left me at a loss whether I was more delighted with my friend's wisdom or simplicity.

No. 113. TUESDAY, July 10, 1711.

In my first description of the company in which I pass most of my time, it may be remembered that I mentioned a great affliction which my friend Sir Roger had met with in his youth; which was no less than a disappointment in love. It happened this evening, that we fell into a very pleasing walk at a distance from his house. As soon as we came into it, 'It is,' quoth the good man, looking round him with a smile, 'very hard, that any part of my land should be settled upon one who has used me so ill as the perverse widow did; and yet I am sure I could not see a sprig of any bough of this whole walk of trees, but I should reflect upon her and her severity. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world. You are to know, this was the place wherein I used to muse upon her, and by that custom I can never come into it, but the same tender sentiments revive in my mind, as if I had actually walked with that beautiful creature under these shades. I have been fool enough to carve her name on the bark of several of these trees; so unhappy is the condition of men in love, to attempt the removing of their passion by the methods which serve only to imprint it deeper. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world.'

Here followed a profound silence; and I was not displeased to observe my friend falling so naturally into a discourse, which I had ever before taken notice he industriously avoided. — After a very long pause he entered upon an account of this great circumstance in his life, with an air which I thought raised my idea of him above what I had ever had before; and gave me the picture of that cheerful mind of his, before it received that stroke which has ever since affected his words and actions. But he went on as follows:

'I came to my estate in my twenty-second year, and resolved to follow the steps of the most worthy of my ancestors who have inhabited this spot of earth before me, in all the methods of hospitality and good neighbourhood, for the sake of my fame; and in country sports and recreations, for the sake of my health. In my twenty-third year I was obliged to serve as sheriff of the county,

and in my servants, officers, and whole equipage, indulged the pleasure of a young man, who did not think ill of his own person, in taking that public occasion of showing my figure and behaviour to advantage. You may easily imagine to yourself what appearance I made, who am pretty tall, rid well, and was very well dressed, at the head of a whole county, with music before me, a feather in my hat, and my horse well bitted. I can assure you, I was not a little pleased with the kind looks and glances I had from all the balconies and windows as I rode to the hall where the assizes were held. But when I came there, a beautiful creature in a widow's habit sat in court to hear the event of a cause concerning her dower. This commanding creature, who was born for the destruction of all who beheld her, put on such a resignation in her countenance, and bore the whispers of all around the court with such a pretty uneasiness, I warrant you, and then recovered herself from one eye to another, till she was perfectly confused by meeting something so wistful in all she encountered, that at last, with a murrain to her, she cast her bewitching eye upon me. I no sooner met it but I bowed like a great surprised booby, and knowing her cause to be the first which came on, I cried, like a captivated calf as I was, "Make way for the defendant's witnesses." This sudden partiality made all the county immediately see the sheriff was also become a slave to the fine widow. During the time her cause was upon trial, she behaved herself, I warrant you, with such a deep attention to her business, took opportunities to have little billets handed to her counsel, then would be in such a pretty confusion, occasioned, you must know, by acting before so much company, that not only I but the whole court was prejudiced in her favour; and all that the next heir to her husband had to urge, was thought so groundless and frivolous, that when it came to her counsel to reply, there was not half so much said as everyone besides in the court thought he could have urged to her advantage. You must understand, sir, this perverse woman is one of those unaccountable creatures that secretly rejoice in the admiration of men, but indulge themselves in no further consequences.

Hence it is that she has ever had a train of admirers, and she removes from her slaves in town to those in the country, according to the seasons of the year. She is a reading lady, and far gone in the pleasures of friendship. She is always accompanied by a confidant, who is witness to her daily protestations against our sex, and consequently a bar to her first steps towards love, upon the strength of her own maxims and declarations.

'However, I must needs say, this accomplished mistress of mine has distinguished me above the rest, and has been known to declare Sir Roger de Coverley was the tamest and most humane of all the brutes in the country. I was told she said so by one who thought he rallied me; but upon the strength of this slender encouragement of being thought least detestable, I made new liveries, new-paired my coach-horses, sent them all to town to be bitted, and taught to throw their legs well, and move all together, before I pretended to cross the country, and wait upon her. As soon as I thought my retinue suitable to the character of my fortune and youth, I set out from hence to make my addresses. The particular skill of this lady has ever been to inflame your wishes, and yet to command respect. To make her mistress of this art, she has a greater share of knowledge, wit, and good sense, than is usual even among men of merit. Then she is beautiful beyond the race of women. If you will not let her go on with a certain artifice with her eyes, and the skill of beauty, she will arm herself with her real charms, and strike you with admiration instead of desire. It is certain that if you were to behold the whole woman, there is that dignity in her aspect, that composure in her motion, that complacency in her manner, that if her form makes you hope, her merit makes you fear. But then again, she is such a desperate scholar, that no country gentleman can approach her without being a jest. As I was going to tell you, when I came to her house, I was admitted to her presence with great civility; at the same time she placed herself to be first seen by me in such an attitude, as I think you call the posture of a picture, that she discovered new charms, and I at last came towards her with such an

awe as made me speechless. This she no sooner observed but she made her advantage of it, and began a discourse to me concerning love and honour, as they both are followed by pretenders, and the real votaries to them. When she discussed these points in a discourse, which, I verily believe, was as learned as the best philosopher in Europe could possibly make, she asked me whether she was so happy as to fall in with my sentiments on these important particulars. Her confidant sat by her, and upon my being in the last confusion and silence, this malicious aid of her's turning to her, says, "I am very glad to observe Sir Roger pauses upon this subject, and seems resolved to deliver all his sentiments upon the matter when he pleases to speak." They both kept their countenances, and after I had sat half an hour meditating how to behave before such profound casuists, I rose up and took my leave. Chance has since that time thrown me very often in her way, and she as often has directed a discourse to me which I do not understand. This barbarity has kept me ever at a distance from the most beautiful object my eyes ever beheld. It is thus also she deals with all mankind, and you must make love to her, as you would conquer the sphinx, by posing her. But were she like other women, and that there were any talking to her, how constant must the pleasure of that man be, who could converse with a creature — But, after all, you may be sure her heart is fixed on some one or other; and yet I have been credibly informed; but who can believe half that is said! — after she had done speaking to me, she put her hand to her bosom, and adjusted her tucker. Then she cast her eyes a little down, upon my beholding her too earnestly. They say she sings excellently: her voice in her ordinary speech has something in it inexpressibly sweet. You must know I dined with her at a public table the day after I first saw her, and she helped me to some tansy in the eye of all the gentlemen in the country. She has certainly the finest hand of any woman in the world. I can assure you, sir, were you to behold her, you would be in the same condition; for, as her speech is music, her form is angelic. But I find I grow irregular while I am

talking of her; but indeed it would be stupidity to be unconcerned at such perfection. Oh, the excellent creature! she is as inimitable to all women, as she is inaccessible to all men —'

I found my friend began to rave, and insensibly led him towards the house, that we might be joined by some other company; and am convinced that the widow is the secret cause of all that inconsistency which appears in some parts of my friend's discourse; though he has so much command of himself as not directly to mention her, yet according to that of Martial, which one knows not how to render into English, *dum tacet, hanc loquitur;*[3] I shall end this paper with that whole epigram, which represents with much humour my honest friend's condition:

"Quidquid agit Rufus, nihil est nisi Nævia Rufo.
Si gaudet, si flet, si tacet, hanc loquitur;
Cœnat, propinat, poscit, negat, innuit, una est
Nævia; si non sit Nævia, mutus erit.
Scriberet hesternâ patri cum luce salutem,
Nævia lux, inquit, Nævia! numen, ave.

MARTIAL, *Epigrams*, I. 69.

"Let Rufus weep, rejoice, stand, sit or walk,
Still he can nothing but of Nævia talk;
Let him eat, drink, ask questions, or dispute,
Still he must speak of Nævia, or be mute.
He writ to his father, ending with this line,
I am, my lovely Nævia, ever thine."

No. 118. MONDAY, July 16, 1711.

This agreeable seat is surrounded with so many pleasing walks, which are struck out of a wood, in the midst of which the house stands, that one can hardly ever be weary of rambling from one labyrinth of delight to another. To one used to live in a city the charms of the country are so exquisite, that the mind is lost in a certain transport which raises us above ordinary life, and yet is not strong enough to be inconsistent with tranquillity. This state

[3] *while he is silent, he speaks of her.*

of mind was I in, ravished with the murmur of waters, the whisper of breezes, the singing of birds; and whether I looked up to the heavens, down on the earth, or turned to the prospects around me, still struck with new sense of pleasure; when I found by the voice of my friend, who walked by me, that we had insensibly strolled into the grove sacred to the widow. 'This woman,' says he, 'is of all others the most unintelligible; she either designs to marry, or she does not. What is the most perplexing of all is, that she does not either say to her lovers she has any resolution against that condition of life in general, or that she banishes them; but conscious of her own merit she permits their addresses without fear of any ill consequences, or want of respect, from their rage or despair. She has that in her aspect, against which it is impossible to offend. A man whose thoughts are constantly bent upon so agreeable an object, must be excused if the ordinary occurrences in conversation are below his attention. I call her indeed perverse, but, alas! why do I call her so? because her superior merit is such, that I cannot approach her without awe, that my heart is checked by too much esteem! I am angry that her charms are not more accessible, that I am more inclined to worship than salute her. How often have I wished her unhappy that I might have an opportunity of serving her? and how often troubled in that very imagination, at giving her the pain of being obliged? Well, I have led a miserable life in secret upon her account; but fancy she would have condescended to have some regard for me, if it had not been for that watchful animal her confidant.

'Of all persons under the sun,' continued he, calling me by my name, 'be sure to set a mark upon confidants: they are of all people the most impertinent. What is most pleasant to observe in them, is, that they assume to themselves the merit of the persons whom they have in their custody. Orestilla is a great fortune, and in wonderful danger of surprises, therefore full of suspicions of the least indifferent thing, particularly careful of new acquaintance, and of growing too familiar with the old. Themista, her favourite woman, is every whit as careful of whom she speaks to,

and what she says. Let the ward be a beauty, her confidant shall treat you with an air of distance; let her be a fortune, and she assumes the suspicious behaviour of her friend and patroness. Thus it is that very many of our unmarried women of distinction are to all intents and purposes married, except the consideration of different sexes. They are directly under the conduct of their whisperers; and think they are in a state of freedom, while they can prate with one of these attendants of all men in general, and still avoid the man they most like. You do not see one heiress in a hundred whose fate does not turn upon this circumstance of choosing a confidant. Thus it is that the lady is addressed to, presented and flattered, only by proxy, in her woman. In my case, how is it possible that—?' Sir Roger was proceeding in his harangue, when we heard the voice of one speaking very importunately, and repeating these words, 'What, not one smile?' We followed the sound till we came to a close thicket, on the other side of which we saw a young woman sitting as it were in a personated sullenness just over a transparent fountain. Opposite to her stood Mr. Williams, Sir Roger's master of the game. The knight whispered me, 'Hist, these are lovers.' The huntsman looking earnestly at the shadow of the young maiden in the stream, 'Oh thou dear picture, if thou couldst remain there in the absence of that fair creature whom you represent in the water, how willingly could I stand here satisfied forever, without troubling my dear Betty herself with any mention of her unfortunate William, whom she is angry with! But alas! when she pleases to be gone, thou wilt also vanish—Yet let me talk to thee while thou dost stay. Tell my dearest Betty thou dost not more depend upon her, than does her William: her absence will make away with me as well as thee. If she offers to remove thee, I will jump into these waves to lay hold on thee; herself, her own dear person, I must never embrace again.—Still do you hear me without one smile—It is too much to bear.'—He had no sooner spoke these words, but he made an offer of throwing himself into the water: at which his mistress started up, and at the next instant he jumped across the

fountain, and met her in an embrace. She, half recovering from her fright, said in the most charming voice imaginable, and with a tone of complaint, 'I thought how well you would drown yourself. No, no, you won't drown yourself till you have taken your leave of Susan Holiday.' The huntsman, with a tenderness that spoke the most passionate love, and with his cheek close to her's, whispered the softest vows of fidelity in her ear, and cried, 'Don't, my dear, believe a word Kate Willow says; she is spiteful, and makes stories, because she loves to hear me talk to herself for your sake.' 'Look you there,' quoth Sir Roger, 'do you see there, all mischief comes from confidants! But let us not interrupt them; the maid is honest and the man dare not be otherwise, for he knows I loved her father: I will interpose in this matter, and hasten the wedding. Kate Willow is a witty mischievous wench in the neighbourhood, who was a beauty: and makes me hope I shall see the perverse widow in her condition. She was so flippant with her answers to all the honest fellows that came near her, and so very vain of her beauty, that she has valued herself upon her charms till they have ceased. She therefore now makes it her business to prevent other young women from being more discreet than she was herself: however, the saucy thing said the other day well enough, "Sir Roger and I must make a match, for we are both despised by those we loved." The hussy has a great deal of power wherever she comes, and has her share of cunning.

'However, when I reflect upon this woman, I do not know whether in the main I am the worse for having loved her: whenever she is recalled to my imagination my youth returns, and I feel a forgotten warmth in my veins. This affliction in my life has streaked all my conduct with a softness, of which I should otherwise have been incapable. It is owing, perhaps, to this dear image in my heart that I am apt to relent, that I easily forgive, and that many desirable things are grown into my temper, which I should not have arrived at by better motives than the thought of being one day hers. I am pretty well satisfied such a passion as I have had is never well cured; and between you and me, I am

often apt to imagine it has had some whimsical effect upon my brain; for I frequently find, that in my most serious discourse I let fall some comical familiarity of speech or odd phrase that makes the company laugh. However, I cannot but allow she is a most excellent woman. When she is in the country, I warrant she does not run into dairies, but reads upon the nature of plants; but has a glass-hive, and comes into the garden out of books to see them work, and observe the policies of their commonwealth. She understands everything. I would give ten pounds to hear her argue with my friend Sir Andrew Freeport about trade. No, no, for all she looks so innocent, as it were, take my word for it she is no fool.'

No. 132. WEDNESDAY, August 1, 1711.

Having notified to my good friend Sir Roger that I should set out for London the next day, his horses were ready at the appointed hour in the evening; and attended by one of his grooms, I arrived at the county-town at twilight, in order to be ready for the stage-coach the day following. As soon as we arrived at the inn, the servant who waited upon me inquired of the chamberlain in my hearing what company he had for the coach? The fellow answered, 'Mrs. Betty Arable the great fortune, and the widow, her mother; a recruiting officer, who took a place because they were to go; young Squire Quickset, her cousin, that her mother wished her to be married to; Ephraim the quaker, her guardian; and a gentleman that has studied himself dumb from Sir Roger de Coverley's.' I observed by what he said of myself that according to his office he dealt much in intelligence; and doubted not but there was some foundation for his reports of the rest of the company, as well as for the whimsical account he gave of me. The next morning at daybreak we were all called; and I who know my own natural shyness, and endeavour to be as little liable to be disputed with as possible, dressed immediately, that I might make no one wait. The first preparation for our setting out was, that the captain's half pike was placed near the coachman, and a

drum behind the coach. In the mean time the drummer, the captain's equipage,[4] was very loud, 'that none of the captain's things should be placed so as to be spoiled;' upon which his cloak-bag was fixed in the seat of the coach; and the captain himself, according to a frequent, though invidious behaviour of miltary men, ordered his man to look sharp, that none but one of the ladies should have the place he had taken fronting the coach-box.

We were in some little time fixed in our seats, and sat with that dislike which people not too good-natured usually conceive of each other at first sight. The coach jumbled us insensibly into some sort of familiarity; and we had not moved above two miles, when the widow asked the captain what success he had in his recruiting? The officer, with a frankness he believed very graceful, told her, 'that indeed he had but very little luck, and had suffered much by desertion, therefore should be glad to end his warfare in the service of her or her fair daughter. In a word,' continued he, 'I am a soldier, and to be plain is my character; you see me, madam, young, sound, and impudent; take me yourself, widow, or give me to her, I will be wholly at your disposal. I am a soldier of fortune, ha!—' This was followed by a vain laugh of his own, and a deep silence of all the rest of the company. I had nothing left for it but to fall fast asleep, which I did with all speed.—

'Come,' said he, 'resolve upon it, we will make a wedding at the next town; we will wake this pleasant companion who is fallen asleep, to be the bride-man; and,' giving the quaker a clap on the knee, he concluded, 'this sly saint, who, I will warrant, understands what is what as well as you or I, widow, shall give the bride as father.' The quaker, who happened to be a man of smartness, answered: 'Friend, I take it in good part that thou hast given me the authority of a father over this comely and virtuous child; and I must assure thee, that if I have the giving her, I shall not bestow her on thee. Thy mirth, friend, savoureth of

[4] attendant.

folly; thou art a person of a light mind; thy drum is a type of thee, it soundeth because it is empty. Verily, it is not from thy fulness, but thy emptiness that thou hast spoken this day. Friend, friend, we have hired this coach in partnership with thee, to carry us to the great city; we cannot go any other way. This worthy mother must hear thee if thou wilt needs utter thy follies; we cannot help it, friend, I say; if thou wilt, we must hear thee; but if thou wert a man of understanding, thou wouldst not take advantage of thy courageous countenance to abash us children of peace.—Thou art, thou sayest, a soldier; give quarter to us, who cannot resist thee. Why didst thou fleer at our friend, who feigned himself asleep? He said nothing; but how dost thou know what he containeth? If thou speakest improper things in the hearing of this virtuous young virgin, consider it as an outrage against a distressed person that cannot get from thee; to speak indiscreetly what we are obliged to hear, by being hasped up with thee in this public vehicle, is in some degree assaulting on the high-road.'

Here Ephraim paused, and the captain, with a happy and uncommon impudence, which can be convicted and support itself at the same time, cries, 'Faith, friend, I thank thee; I should have been a little impertinent if thou hadst not reprimanded me. Come, thou art, I see, a smoky old fellow, and I will be very orderly the ensuing part of the journey. I was going to give myself airs, but, ladies, I beg pardon.'

The captain was so little out of humour, and our company was so far from being soured by this little ruffle, that Ephraim and he took a particular delight in being agreeable to each other for the future; and assumed their different provinces in the conduct of the company. Our reckonings, apartments, and accommodation, fell under Ephraim; and the captain looked to all disputes on the road, as the good behaviour of our coachman, and the right we had of taking place, as going to London, of all vehicles coming from thence. The occurrences we met with were ordinary, and very little happened which could entertain by the relation of

them ; but when I considered the company we were in, I took it for no small good fortune, that the whole journey was not spent in impertinences, which to one part of us might be an entertainment, to the other a suffering. What therefore Ephraim said when we were almost arrived at London, had to me an air not only of good understanding, but good breeding. Upon the young lady's expressing her satisfaction in the journey, and declaring how delightful it had been to her, Ephraim delivered himself as follows : 'There is no ordinary part of human life, which expresseth so much a good mind, and a right inward man, as his behaviour upon meeting with strangers, especially such as may seem the most unsuitable companions to him ; such a man, when he falleth in the way with persons of simplicity and innocence, however knowing he may be in the ways of men, will not vaunt himself thereof, but will the rather hide his superiority to them, that he may not be painful unto them. My good friend,' continued he, turning to the officer, 'thee and I are to part by and by, and peradventure we may never meet again ; but be advised by a plain man ; modes and apparel are but trifles to the real man, therefore do not think such a man as thyself terrible for thy garb, nor such a one as me contemptible for mine. When two such as thee and I meet, with affections as we ought to have towards each other, thou shouldst rejoice to see my peaceable demeanor, and I should be glad to see thy strength and ability to protect me in it.'

2. On Reading the Church-Service.

No. 147. SATURDAY, August 18, 1711.

"Mr. Spectator,

"The well reading of the Common-Prayer is of so great importance, and so much neglected, that I take the liberty to offer to your consideration some particulars on that subject. And what more worthy your observation than this? A thing so public, and of so high consequence. It is indeed wonderful, that the frequent

exercise of it should not make the performers of that duty more expert in it. This inability, as I conceive, proceeds from the little care that is taken of their reading while boys and at school, where when they are got into Latin, they are looked upon as above English, the reading of which is wholly neglected, or at least read to very little purpose, without any due observations made to them of the proper accent and manner of reading; by this means they have acquired such ill habits as will not easily be removed. The only way that I know of to remedy this, is to propose some person of great ability that way as a pattern for them; example being most effectual to convince the learned, as well as instruct the ignorant.

"You must know, sir, I have been a constant frequenter of the service of the Church of England for above these four years last past, and till Sunday was seven-night never discovered, to so great a degree, the excellency of the Common-Prayer. When, being at St. James's Garlick-Hill church, I heard the service read so distinctly, so emphatically, and so fervently, that it was next to an impossibility to be unattentive. My eyes and my thoughts could not wander as usual, but were confined to my prayers. I then considered I addressed myself to the Almighty, and not to a beautiful face. And when I reflected on my former performances of that duty, I found I had run it over as a matter of form, in comparison to the manner in which I then discharged it. My mind was really affected, and fervent wishes accompanied my words. The Confession was read with such resigned humility, the Absolution with such a comfortable authority, the Thanksgivings with such a religious joy, as made me feel those affections of the mind in a manner I never did before. To remedy, therefore, the grievance above complained of, I humbly propose, that this excellent reader, upon the next and every annual assembly of the clergy of Sion-college, and all other conventions, should read prayers before them. For then those that are afraid of stretching their mouths, and spoiling their soft voices, will learn to read with clearness, loudness, and strength; others that affect a rakish negligent air, by folding their

arms and lolling on their book, will be taught a decent behaviour, and comely erection of body. Those that read so fast as if impatient of their work, may learn to speak deliberately. There is another sort of persons whom I call Pindaric readers, as being confined to no set measure; these pronounce five or six words with great deliberation, and the five or six subsequent ones with as great celerity; the first part of a sentence with a very exalted voice, and the latter part with a submissive one; sometimes again, with one sort of a tone, and immediately after with a very different one. These gentlemen will learn of my admired reader an evenness of voice and delivery, and all who are innocent of these affectations, but read with such an indifferency as if they did not understand the language, may then be informed of the art of reading movingly and fervently, how to place the emphasis, and give the proper accent to each word, and how to vary the voice according to the nature of the sentence. There is certainly a very great difference between the reading a prayer and a gazette, which I beg of you to inform a set of readers, who affect, forsooth, a certain gentleman-like familiarity of tone, and mend the language as they go on, crying, instead of 'pardoneth and absolveth,' 'pardons and absolves.' These are often pretty classical scholars, and would think it an unpardonable sin to read Virgil or Martial with so little taste as they do divine service.

"This indifferency seems to me to arise from the endeavour of avoiding the imputation of cant, and the false notion of it. It will be proper, therefore, to trace the original and signification of this word. 'Cant' is, by some people, derived from one Andrew Cant, who, they say, was a presbyterian minister in some illiterate part of Scotland, who by exercise and use had obtained the faculty, alias gift, of talking in the pulpit in such a dialect that it is said he was understood by none but his own congregation, and not by all of them. Since Master Cant's time, it has been understood in a larger sense, and signifies all sudden exclamations, whinings, unusual tones, and in fine all praying and preaching, like the unlearned of the Presbyterians. But I hope a proper elevation of voice, a

due emphasis and accent, are not to come within this description. So that our readers may still be as unlike the Presbyterians as they please. The dissenters, I mean such as I have heard, do indeed elevate their voices, but it is with sudden jumps from the lower to the higher part of them; and that with so little sense or skill, that their elevation and cadence is bawling and muttering. They make use of an emphasis, but so improperly, that it is often placed on some very insignificant particle, as upon 'if' or 'and.' Now if these improprieties have so great an effect on the people, as we see they have, how great an influence would the service of our church, containing the best prayers that ever were composed, and that in terms most affecting, most humble, and most expressive of our wants, and dependence on the object of our worship, disposed in most proper order, and void of all confusion; what influence, I say, would these prayers have, were they delivered with a due emphasis, and apposite rising and variation of voice, the sentence concluded with a gentle cadence, and in a word, with such an accent and turn of speech as is peculiar to prayer!

"As the matter of worship is now managed, in dissenting congregations, you find insignificant words and phrases raised by a lively vehemence; in our own churches, the most exalted sense depreciated by a dispassionate indolence. I remember to have heard Dr. S — e say in his pulpit, of the Common-Prayer, that, at least, it was as perfect as anything of human institution. If the gentlemen who err in this kind would please to recollect the many pleasantries they have read upon those who recite good things with an ill grace, they would go on to think that what in that case is only ridiculous, in themselves is impious. But leaving this to their own reflections, I shall conclude this trouble with what Cæsar said upon the irregularity of tone in one who read before him, 'Do you read or sing? If you sing, you sing very ill.'[5]

"Your most humble servant."

[5] *Si legis, cantas; si cantas, male cantas.* — C. CAESAR in QUINTILIAN, I, 8, 2, with clauses transposed.

XVII.

DANIEL DEFOE.

(1661–1731.)

HISTORY OF THE PLAGUE IN LONDON, 1665.

[Written about 1722.]

I LIVED without Aldgate, about midway between Aldgate church and Whitechapel Bars, on the left hand or north side of the street; and as the distemper had not reached to that side of the city, our neighbourhood continued very easy; but at the other end of the town their consternation was very great, and the richer sort of people, especially the nobility and gentry from the west part of the city, thronged out of town, with their families and servants, in an unusual manner; and this was more particularly seen in Whitechapel; that is to say, the Broad-street where I lived; indeed nothing was to be seen, but waggons and carts, with goods, women, servants, children, etc.; coaches filled with people of the better sort, and horsemen attending them, and all hurrying away; then empty waggons and carts appeared, and spare horses with servants, who it was apparent were returning or sent from the country to fetch more people: besides innumerable numbers of men on horseback, some alone, others with servants, and generally speaking, all loaded with baggage and fitted out for travelling, as any one might perceive by their appearance.

This was a very terrible and melancholy thing to see, and as it was a sight which I could not but look on from morning to night (for indeed there was nothing else of moment to be seen,) it filled me with very serious thoughts of the misery that was coming

upon the city, and the unhappy condition of those that would be left in it.

This hurry of the people was such for some weeks, that there was no getting at the lord mayor's door without exceeding difficulty; there was such pressing and crowding there to get passes and certificates of health, for such as travelled abroad; for, without these, there was no being admitted to pass through the towns upon the road, or to lodge in any inn. Now as there had none died in the city for all this time, my lord mayor gave certificates of health without any difficulty to all those who lived in the ninety-seven parishes, and to those within the liberties too, for awhile.

This hurry, I say, continued some weeks, that is to say, all the months of May and June, and the more because it was rumoured that an order of the government was to be issued out, to place turnpikes[1] and barriers on the road, to prevent people's travelling; and that the towns on the road would not suffer people from London to pass, for fear of bringing the infection along with them, though neither of these rumours had any foundation, but in the imagination, especially at first.

I now began to consider seriously with myself, concerning my own case, and how I should dispose of myself; that is to say, whether I should resolve to stay in London, or shut up my house and flee, as many of my neighbours did. I have set this particular down so fully, because I know not but it may be of moment to those who come after me, if they come to be brought to the same distress, and to the same manner of making their choice, and therefore I desire this account may pass with them rather for a direction to themselves to act by, than a history of my actings, seeing it may not be of one farthing value to them to note what became of me.

I had two important things before me; the one was the carrying on my business and shop, which was considerable, and in which was embarked all my effects in the world; and the other was the preservation of my life in so dismal a calamity, as I saw

[1] turnstiles, or gates, to prevent passing without authority.

apparently was coming upon the whole city; and which, however great it was, my fears perhaps, as well as other people's, represented to be much greater than it could be.

The first consideration was of great moment to me; my trade was a saddler, and as my dealings were chiefly not by a shop or chance trade, but among the merchants, trading to the English colonies in America, so my effects lay very much in the hands of such. I was a single man it is true, but I had a family of servants, who I kept at my business; had a house, shop, and warehouses filled with goods; and, in short, to leave them all as things in such a case must be left, that is to say, without any overseer or person fit to be trusted with them, had been to hazard the loss not only of my trade, but of my goods, and indeed of all I had in the world.

I had an elder brother at the same time in London, and not many years before come over from Portugal; and, advising with him, his answer was in the three words, the same that was given in another case quite different, viz., Master, save thyself. In a word, he was for my retiring into the country, as he resolved to do himself, with his family; telling me, what he had, it seems, heard abroad, that the best preparation for the plague was to run away from it. As to my argument of losing my trade, my goods, or debts, he quite confuted me: he told me the same thing, which I argued for my staying, viz., That I would trust God with my safety and health, was the strongest repulse to my pretentions of losing my trade and my goods; For, says he, is it not as reasonable that you should trust God with the chance or risk of losing your trade, as that you should stay in so eminent a point of danger, and trust him with your life?

I could not argue that I was in any strait as to a place where to go, having several friends and relations in Northamptonshire, whence our family first came from; and particularly, I had an only sister in Lincolnshire, very willing to receive and entertain me.

My brother, who had already sent his wife and two children

into Bedfordshire, and resolved to follow them, pressed my going very earnestly; and I had once resolved to comply with his desires, but at that time could get no horse: for though it is true, all the people did not go out of the city of London; yet I may venture to say, that in a manner all the horses did; for there was hardly a horse to be bought or hired in the whole city, for some weeks. Once I resolved to travel on foot with one servant; and as many did, lie at no inn, but carry a soldier's tent with us, and so lie in the fields, the weather being very warm, and no danger from taking cold. I say, as many did, because several did so at the last, especially those who had been in the armies, in the war which had not been many years past: and I must needs say, that speaking of second causes, had most of the people that travelled done so, the plague had not been carried into so many country towns and houses as it was, to the great damage, and indeed to the ruin of abundance of people.

But then, my servant, who I had intended to take down with me, deceived me, and being frighted at the increase of the distemper, and not knowing when I should go, he took other measures, and left me, so I was put off for that time; and one way or other, I always found that to appoint to go away, was always crossed by some accident or other, so as to disappoint and put it off again; and this brings in a story which otherwise might be thought a needless digression, viz., about these disappointments being from heaven.

It came very warmly into my mind, one morning, as I was musing on this particular thing, that as nothing attended us without the direction or permission of Divine Power, so these disappointments must have something in them extraordinary: and I ought to consider whether it did not evidently point out, or intimate to me, that it was the will of Heaven I should not go. It immediately followed in my thoughts, that it really was from God that I should stay; he was able effectually to preserve me in the midst of all the death and danger that would surround me; and that if I attempted to secure myself by fleeing from my habitation, and

acted contrary to these intimations, which I believed to be divine, it was a kind of flying from God, and that he could cause his justice to overtake me when and where he thought fit.

These thoughts quite turned my resolutions again, and when I came to discourse with my brother again, I told him, that I inclined to stay and take my lot in that station, in which God had placed me; and that it seemed to be made more especially my duty, on the account of what I have said.

My brother, though a very religious man himself, laughed at all I had suggested about its being an intimation from heaven, and told me several stories of such foolhardy people, as he called them, as I was; that I ought indeed to submit to it as a work of heaven, if I had been any way disabled by distempers or diseases, and that then not being able to go, I ought to acquiesce in the direction of Him, who, having been my Maker, had an undisputed right of sovereignty in disposing of me; and that then there had been no difficulty to determine which was the call of his providence and which was not; but that I should take it as an intimation from heaven, that I should not go out of town, only because I could not hire a horse to go, or my fellow was run away that was to attend me, was ridiculous, since at the same time I had my health and limbs, and other servants, and might with ease travel a day or two on foot, and having a good certificate of being in perfect health, might either hire a horse, or take post on the road, as I thought fit.

Then he proceeded to tell me of the mischievous consequences which attend the presumption of the Turks and Mahometans in Asia, and in other places, where he had been (for my brother, being a merchant, was a few years before, as I have already observed, returned from abroad, coming last from Lisbon), and how, presuming upon their professed predestinating notions, and of every man's end being predetermined, and unalterably beforehand decreed, they would go unconcerned into infected places, and converse with infected persons, by which means they died at the rate of ten or fifteen thousand a week, whereas the Euro-

peans or Christian merchants who kept themselves retired and reserved, generally escaped the contagion.

Upon these arguments my brother changed my resolutions again, and I began to resolve to go, and accordingly made all things ready; for, in short, the infection increased round me, and the bills were risen to almost seven hundred a week, and my brother told me he would venture to stay no longer. I desired him to let me consider of it but till the next day, and I would resolve; and as I had already prepared everything as well as I could, as to my business, and who to intrust my affairs with, I had little to do but to resolve.

I went home that evening greatly oppressed in my mind, irresolute, and not knowing what to do. I had set the evening wholly apart to consider seriously about it, and was all alone; for already people had, as it were by a general consent, taken up the custom of not going out of doors after sunset, the reasons I shall have occasion to say more of by and by.

In the retirement of this evening I endeavoured to resolve first, what was my duty to do, and I stated the arguments with which my brother had pressed me to go into the country, and I set against them the strong impressions which I had on my mind for staying; the visible call I seemed to have from the particular circumstance of my calling, and the care due from me for the preservation of my effects, which were, as I might say, my estate: also the intimations which I thought I had from heaven, that to me signified a kind of direction to venture, and it occurred to me, that if I had what I call a direction to stay, I ought to suppose it contained a promise of being preserved, if I obeyed.

This lay close to me, and my mind seemed more and more encouraged to stay than ever, and supported with a secret satisfaction, that I should be kept. Add to this, that turning over the Bible, which lay before me, and while my thoughts were more than ordinary serious upon the question, I cried out, Well, I know not what to do, Lord direct me! and the like; and at that juncture I happened to stop turning over the book, at the 91st

Psalm, and casting my eye on the second verse, I read to the seventh verse exclusive; and after that, included the 10th, as follows: — "I will say of the Lord, he is my refuge, and my fortress, my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the arrow that flieth by day: nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noon-day. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord which is my refuge, even the most high, thy habitation: there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling," &c.

I scarce need tell the reader that from that moment I resolved that I would stay in the town, and casting myself entirely upon the goodness and protection of the Almighty, would not seek any other shelter whatever; and that as my times were in his hands, he was as able to keep me in a time of the infection, as in a time of health; and if he did not think fit to deliver me, still I was in his hands, and it was meet he should do with me as should seem good to him.

With this resolution I went to bed; and I was farther confirmed in it the next day, by the woman being taken ill with whom I had intended to intrust my house and all my affairs. But I had a farther obligation laid on me on the same side, for the next day I found myself very much out of order also; so that if I would have gone away, I could not, and I continued ill three or four days, and this entirely determined my stay; so I took my leave of my brother, who went away to Dorking, in Surrey, and afterwards fetched around farther into Buckinghamshire, or Bedfordshire, to a retreat he had found out there for his family.

It was a very ill time to be sick in, for if any one complained, it

was immediately said he had the plague; and though I had indeed no symptoms of that distemper, yet being very ill, both in my head and in my stomach, I was not without apprehension that I really was infected, but in about three days I grew better, the third night I rested well, sweated a little, and was much refreshed; the apprehensions of its being the infection went also quite away with my illness, and I went about my business as usual.

These things however, put off all my thoughts of going into the country; and my brother also being gone, I had no more debate either with him, or with myself, on that subject.

It was now mid July, and the plague, which had chiefly raged at the other end of the town, and as I said before, in the parishes of St. Giles's, St. Andrew's, Holborn, and towards Westminster, began now to come eastward, towards the part where I lived. It was to be observed indeed, that it did not come straight on towards us; for the city, that is to say within the walls, was indifferent healthy still; nor was it got then very much over the water into Southwark; for though there died that week 1268 of all distempers, whereof it might be supposed above nine hundred died of the plague; yet there was but twenty-eight in the whole city, within the walls, and but nineteen in Southwark, Lambeth parish included; whereas in the parishes of St. Giles, and St. Martin's in the Fields alone, there died four hundred and twenty-one.

But we perceived the infection kept chiefly in the out parishes, which being very populous, and fuller also of poor, the distemper found more to prey upon than in the city, as I shall observe afterward; we perceived, I say, the distemper to draw our way, viz., by the parishes of Clerkenwell, Cripplegate, Shoreditch, and Bishopsgate; which last two parishes joining to Aldgate, Whitechapel, and Stepney, the infection came at length to spread its utmost rage and violence in those parts, even when it abated at the western parishes where it began.

It was very strange to observe, that in this particular week, from the 4th to the 11th of July, when, as I have observed, there died near four hundred of the plague in the parishes of St. Mar-

tin's and St. Giles's in the Fields only, there died in the parish of Aldgate but four, in the parish of Whitechapel three, in the parish of Stepney but one.

Likewise in the next week, from the 11th of July to the 18th, when the week's bill was 1761, yet there died no more of the plague, on the whole Southwark side of the water, than sixteen.

But this face of things soon changed, and it began to thicken in Cripplegate parish especially, and in Clerkenwell; so that by the second week in August, Cripplegate parish alone buried eight hundred and eighty-six, and Clerkenwell one hundred and fifty-five; of the first, eight hundred and fifty might well be reckoned to die of the plague; and of the last, the bill itself said, one hundred and forty-five were of the plague.

During the month of July, and while, as I have observed, our part of the town seemed to be spared in comparison of the west part, I went ordinarily about the streets, as my business required, and particularly went gradually once in a day, or in two days, into the city, to my brother's house, which he had given me charge of, and to see it was safe; and having the key in my pocket I used to go into the house, and over most of the rooms, to see that all was well; for though it be something wonderful to tell, that any should have hearts so hardened, in the midst of such a calamity, as to rob and steal; yet, certain it is, that all sorts of villanies, and even levities and debaucheries, were then practised in the town, as openly as ever, I will not say quite as frequently, because the number of people were many ways lessened.

But the city itself began now to be visited too, I mean within the walls; but the number of people there were, indeed, extremely lessened, by so great a multitude having been gone into the country; and even all this month of July they continued to flee, though not in such multitudes as formerly. In August, indeed, they fled in such a manner, that I began to think there would be really none but magistrates and servants left in the city.

As they fled now out of the city, so I should observe, that the court removed early, viz., in the month of June, and went to

Oxford, where it pleased God to preserve them; and the distemper did not, as I heard of, so much as touch them; for which I cannot say, that I ever saw they showed any great token of thankfulness, and hardly anything of reformation, though they did not want being told that their crying vices might, without breach of charity, be said to have gone far in bringing that terrible judgment upon the whole nation.

The face of London was now indeed strangely altered, I mean the whole mass of buildings, city, liberties, suburbs, Westminster, Southwark, and altogether; for, as to the particular part called the city, or within the walls, that was not yet much infected; but in the whole, the face of things, I say, was much altered; sorrow and sadness sat upon every face, and though some part were not yet overwhelmed, yet all looked deeply concerned; and as we saw it apparently coming on, so every one looked on himself, and his family, as in the utmost danger: were it possible to represent those times exactly, to those that did not see them, and give the reader due ideas of the horror that everywhere presented itself, it must make just impressions upon their minds, and fill them with surprise. London might well be said to be all in tears; the mourners did not go about the streets indeed, for nobody put on black, or made a formal dress of mourning for their nearest friends; but the voice of mourning was truly heard in the streets; the shrieks of women and children at the windows and doors of their houses, where their nearest relations were, perhaps dying, or just dead, were so frequent to be heard, as we passed the streets, that it was enough to pierce the stoutest heart in the world to hear them. Tears and lamentations were seen almost in every house, especially in the first part of the visitation; for towards the latter end men's hearts were hardened, and death was so always before their eyes, that they did not so much concern themselves for the loss of their friends, expecting that themselves should be summoned the next hour.

Business led me out sometimes to the other end of the town, even when the sickness was chiefly there; and as the thing was

new to me, as well as to everybody else, it was a most surprising thing to see those streets, which were usually so thronged, now grown desolate, and so few people to be seen in them, that if I had been a stranger, and at a loss for my way, I might sometimes have gone the length of a whole street, I mean of the by-streets, and see[2] nobody to direct me, except watchmen set at the doors of such houses as were shut up, of which I shall speak presently.

One day, being at that part of the town, on some special business, curiosity led me to observe things more than usually; and indeed I walked a great way where I had no business; I went up Holborn, and there the street was full of people; but they walked in the middle of the great street, neither on one side or other, because, as I suppose, they would not mingle with anybody that came out of houses, or meet with smells and scents from houses that might be infected.

The inns of court were all shut up, nor were very many of the lawyers in the Temple, or Lincoln's-inn, or Gray's-inn, to be seen there. Everybody was at peace, there was no occasion for lawyers; besides, it being in the time of the vacation too, they were generally gone into the country. Whole rows of houses in some places, were shut close up, the inhabitants all fled, and only a watchman or two left.

When I speak of rows of houses being shut up, I do not mean shut up by the magistrates; but that great numbers of persons followed the court, by the necessity of their employments, and other dependencies; and as others retired, really frighted with the distemper, it was a mere desolating of some of the streets: but the fright was not yet near so great in the city, abstractedly so called; and particularly because, though they were at first in a most inexpressible consternation, yet, as I have observed, that the distemper intermitted often at first, so they were as it were alarmed, and unalarmed again, and this several times, till it began to be familiar to them; and that even when it appeared violent, yet seeing it did not presently spread into the city, or the east or

[2] Defoe does not always observe grammatical correctness.

south parts, the people began to take courage, and to be, as I may say, a little hardened. It is true, a vast many people fled, as I have observed, yet they were chiefly from the west end of the town, and from that we call the heart of the city, that is to say, among the wealthiest of the people; and such persons as were unincumbered with trades and business. But of the rest, the generality stayed, and seemed to abide the worst; so that in the place we call the liberties, and in the suburbs, in Southwark, and in the east part, such as Wapping, Ratcliff, Stepney, Rotherhithe, and the like, the people generally stayed, except here and there a few wealthy families, who, as above, did not depend upon their business.

It must not be forgot here, that the city and suburbs were prodigiously full of people at the time of this visitation, I mean at the time that it began; for though I have lived to see a farther increase, and mighty throngs of people settling in London, more than ever; yet we had always a notion that numbers of people, which, the wars being over, the armies disbanded, and the royal family and the monarchy being restored, had flocked to London to settle in business, or to depend upon, and attend the court for rewards of services, preferments, and the like, was [2] such, that the town was computed to have in it above a hundred thousand people more than ever it held before; nay, some took upon them to say, it had twice as many, because all the ruined families of the royal party flocked hither; all the soldiers set up trades here, and abundance of families settled here; again, the court brought with it a great flux of pride and new fashions; all people were gay and luxurious, and the joy of the restoration had brought a vast many families to London.

But I must go back again to the beginning of this surprising time; while the fears of the people were young, they were increased strangely by several odd accidents, which put altogether, it was really a wonder the whole body of the people did not rise as one man and abandon their dwellings, leaving the place as a space of ground designed by heaven for an Akeldama, doomed to

be destroyed from the face of the earth, and that all that would be found in it would perish with it. I shall name but a few of these things; but sure they were so many, and so many wizards and cunning people propagating them, that I have often wondered there was any (women especially) left behind.

In the first place, a blazing star or comet appeared for several months before the plague, as there did the year after, another, a little before the fire; the old women, and the phlegmatic hypochondriac part of the other sex, whom I could almost call old women too, remarked, especially afterward though not till both those judgments were over, that those two comets passed directly over the city, and that so very near the houses that it was plain they imported something peculiar to the city alone. That the comet before the pestilence was of a faint, dull, languid colour, and its motion very heavy, solemn, and slow; but that the comet before the fire, was bright and sparkling, or, as others said, flaming, and its motion swift and furious, and that, accordingly, one foretold a heavy judgment, slow but severe, terrible, and frightful, as was the plague. But the other foretold a stroke, sudden, swift and fiery, as was the conflagration; nay, so particular some people were, that as they looked upon that comet preceding the fire,[3] they fancied that they not only saw it pass swiftly and fiercely, and could perceive the motion with their eye, but even they heard it, that it made a rushing mighty noise, fierce and terrible, though at a distance, and but just perceivable.

I saw both these stars, and I must confess, had had so much of the common notion of such things in my head, that I was apt to look upon them as the forerunners and warnings of God's judgments, and especially when the plague had followed the first, I yet saw another of the like kind, I could not but say God had not yet sufficiently scourged the city.

The apprehensions of the people were likewise strangely increased by the error of the times, in which, I think, the people, from what principle I cannot imagine, were more addicted to

[3] The great fire of 1666.

prophecies, and astrological conjurations, dreams, and old wives' tales, than ever they were before or since: whether this unhappy temper was originally raised by the follies of some people who got money by it, that is to say, by printing predictions and prognostications, I know not, but certain it is, books frighted them terribly; such as Lily's Almanack, Gadbury's Astrological Predictions, Poor Robin's Almanack, and the like; also several pretended religious books, one entitled, Come out of Her my People, lest ye be partaker of her Plagues; another called, Fair Warning; another Britain's Remembrancer, and many such; all, or most part of which, foretold directly or covertly, the ruin of the city; nay, some were so enthusiastically bold, as to run about the streets with their oral predictions, pretending they were sent to preach to the city; and one in particular, who like Jonah to Nineveh, cried in the streets, Yet forty days and London shall be destroyed. I will not be positive whether he said yet forty days, or yet a few days. Another ran about naked, except a pair of drawers about his waist, crying day and night, like a man that Josephus mentions, who cried, Woe to Jerusalem! a little before the destruction of that city; so this poor naked creature cried, O! the great and the dreadful God! and said no more, but repeated those words continually, with a voice and countenance full of horror, a swift pace, and nobody could ever find him to stop, or rest, or take any sustenance, at least that ever I could hear of. I met this poor creature several times in the streets, and would have spoke to him, but he would not enter into speech with me, or any one else; but kept on his dismal cries continually.

These things terrified the people to the last degree; and especially when two or three times, as I have mentioned already, they found one or two in the bills, dead of the plague at St. Giles's. Next to these public things, were the dreams of old women; or, I should say, the interpretation of old women upon other peoples' dreams; and these put abundance of people even out of their wits. Some heard voices warning them to be gone, for that there would be such a plague in London, so that the living would not

be able to bury the dead; others saw apparitions in the air, and I must be allowed to say of both, I hope without breach of charity, that they heard voices that never spake, and saw sights that never appeared; but the imagination of the people was really turned wayward and possessed; and no wonder if they who were poring continually at the clouds, saw shapes and figures, representations and appearances, which had nothing in them but air and vapour. Here they told us they saw a flaming sword held in a hand, coming out of a cloud, with a point hanging directly over the city. There they saw hearses and coffins in the air carrying to be buried. And there again, heaps of dead bodies lying unburied and the like; just as the imagination of the poor terrified people furnished them with matter to work upon.

> So hypochondriac fancies represent
> Ships, armies, battles in the firmament;
> Till steady eyes the exhalations solve,
> And all to its first matter, cloud, resolve.

I could fill this account with the strange relations such people give every day of what they have seen; and every one was so positive of their having seen what they pretended to see, that there was no contradicting them without breach of friendship, or being accounted rude and unmannerly on the one hand, and profane and impenetrable on the other. One time before the plague was begun, otherwise than as I have said in St. Giles's, I think it was in March, seeing a crowd of people in the street, I joined with them to satisfy my curiosity, and found them all staring up into the air to see what a woman told them appeared plain to her, which was an angel clothed in white, with a fiery sword in his hand, waving it or brandishing it over his head. She described every part of the figure to the life, showed them the motion and the form, and the poor people came into it so eagerly and with so much readiness: Yes! I see it all plainly, says one, there's the sword as plain as can be; another saw the angel: one saw his very face, and cried out, What a glorious creature he was! One

saw one thing, and one another. I looked as earnestly as the rest, but, perhaps, not with so much willingness to be imposed upon; and I said, indeed, that I could see nothing but a white cloud, bright on one side, by the shining of the sun upon the other part. The woman endeavoured to show it to me, but could not make me confess that I saw it, which, indeed, if I had, I must have lied: but the woman turning to me looked me in the face and fancied I laughed, in which her imagination deceived her too, for I really did not laugh, but was seriously reflecting how the poor people were terrified by the force of their own imagination. However, she turned to me, called me profane fellow, and a scoffer, told me that it was a time of God's anger, and dreadful judgments were approaching, and that despisers, such as I, should wander [*sic*] and perish.

The people about her seemed disgusted as well as she, and I found there was no persuading them that I did not laugh at them, and that I should be rather mobbed by them than be able to undeceive them. So I left them, and this appearance passed for as real as the blazing star itself.

Another encounter I had in the open day also; and this was in going through a narrow passage from Petty-France into Bishopsgate churchyard, by a row of almshouses; there are two churchyards to Bishopsgate church or parish, one we go over to pass from the place called Petty-France into Bishopsgate street, coming out just by the church door, the other is on the side of the narrow passage where the almshouses are on the left, and a dwarf wall with a palisade on it on the right hand, and the city wall on the other side more to the right.

In this narrow passage stands a man looking through the palisades into the burying-place, and as many people as the narrowness of the place would admit to stop without hindering the passage of others, and he was talking mighty eagerly to them, and pointing now to one place, then to another, and affirming that he saw a ghost walking upon such a gravestone there; he described the shape, the posture, and the movement of it so exactly, that it

was the greatest amazement to him in the world that everybody did not see it as well as he. On a sudden he would cry, There it is! Now it comes this way! then, 'Tis turned back! till at length he persuaded the people into so firm a belief of it, that one fancied he saw it; and thus he came every day making a strange hubbub, considering it was so narrow a passage, till Bishopsgate clock struck eleven, and then the ghost would seem to start, and, as if he were called away, disappeared on a sudden.

I looked earnestly every way and at the very moment that this man directed, but could not see the least appearance of anything, but so positive was this poor man that he gave them vapours in abundance, and sent them away trembling and frightened, till at length few people that knew of it cared to go through that passage, and hardly anybody by night on any account whatever.

This ghost, as the poor man affirmed, made signs to the houses, and to the ground, and to the people, plainly intimating, or else they so understanding it, that abundance of people should come to be buried in that churchyard, as indeed happened, but then he saw such aspects, I must acknowledge I never believed, nor could I see anything of it myself, though I looked most earnestly to see it if possible.

Some endeavours were used to suppress the printing of such books as terrified the people, and to frighten the dispensers of them, some of whom were taken up, but nothing done in it, as I am informed, the government being unwilling to exasperate the people, who were, as I may say, all out of their wits already. Neither can I acquit those ministers that, in their sermons, rather sunk than lifted up the hearts of their hearers; many of them, I doubt not, did it for the strengthening the resolution of the people, and especially for quickening them to repentance; but it certainly answered not their end, at least not in proportion to the injury it did another way.

One mischief always introduces another; these terrors and apprehensions of the people led them to a thousand weak, foolish, and wicked things, which they wanted not a sort of people really

wicked to encourage them to, and this was running about to fortune-tellers, cunning men, and astrologers, to know their fortunes, or, as it is vulgarly expressed, to have their fortunes told them, their nativities calculated, and the like, and this folly presently made the town swarm with a wicked generation of pretenders to magic; to the black art, as they called it, and I know not what; nay, to a thousand worse dealings with the devil than they were really guilty of, and this trade grew so open and so generally practised, that it became common to have signs and inscriptions set up at doors, Here lives a fortune-teller; Here lives an astrologer; Here you may have your nativity calculated; and the like; and friar Bacon's[4] brazen-head, which was the usual sign of these peoples' dwellings, was to be seen almost in every street, or else the sign of Mother Shipton, or of Merlin's head, and the like.

With what blind, absurd, and ridiculous stuff these oracles of the devil pleased and satisfied the people, I really know not, but certain it is, that innumerable attendants crowded about their doors every day: and if but a grave fellow in a velvet jacket, a band, and a black cloak, which was the habit those quack-conjurers generally went in, was but seen in the streets, the people would follow them in crowds and ask them questions as they went along.

The case of poor servants was very dismal, as I shall have occasion to mention again, by and by; for it was apparent a prodigious number of them would be turned away, and it was so, and of them abundance perished, and particularly those whom these false prophets flattered with hopes that they should be kept in their services and carried with their masters and mistresses into the country; and had not public charity provided for these poor creatures, whose number was exceeding great, and in all cases of this nature must be so, they would have been in the worst condition of any people in the city.

These things agitated the minds of the common people for many months while the first apprehensions were upon them, and while

[4] Roger Bacon, the philosopher (1214–92), who was thought to practise magic. See Greene's play, "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay."

the plague was not, as I may say, yet broken out; but I must also not forget that the more serious part of the inhabitants behaved after another manner; the government encouraged their devotion, and appointed public prayers and days of fasting and humiliation, to make public confession of sin, and implore the mercy of God, to avert the dreadful judgment which hangs over their heads; and, it is not to be expressed with what alacrity the people of all persuasions embraced the occasion, how they flocked to the churches and meetings, and they were all so thronged that there was often no coming near, even to the very doors of the largest churches: also, there were daily prayers appointed morning and evening at several churches, and days of private praying at other places, at all which the people attended, I say, with an uncommon devotion; several private families also, as well of one opinion as another, kept family fasts, to which they admitted their near relations only; so that, in a word, those people who were really serious and religious, applied themselves in a truly Christian manner to the proper work of repentance and humiliation, as a Christian people ought to do.

Again, the public showed that they would bear their share in these things; the very court, which was then gay and luxurious, put on a face of just concern for the public danger. All the plays and interludes, which, after the manner of the French court, had been set up and began to increase among us, were forbid to act; the gaming-tables, public dancing rooms, and music houses, which multiplied and began to debauch the manners of the people, were shut up and suppressed; and the jack-puddings, merry-andrews, puppet-shows, rope-dancers, and such-like doings, which had bewitched the common people, shut their shops, finding indeed no trade, for the minds of the people were agitated with other things, and a kind of sadness and horror at these things sat upon the countenances even of the common people; death was before their eyes, and everybody began to think of their graves, not of mirth and diversions.

But even these wholesome reflections, which, rightly managed,

would have most happily led the people to fall upon their knees, make confession of their sins, and look up to their merciful Saviour for pardon, imploring his compassion on them in such a time of their distress, by which we might have been as a second Nineveh, had a quite contrary extreme in the common people: who, ignorant and stupid in their reflections, as they were brutishly wicked and thoughtless before, were now led by their fright to extremes of folly; and, as I said before, that they ran to conjurers and witches and all sorts of deceivers, to know what should become of them, who fed their fears, and kept them always alarmed and awake, on purpose to delude them and pick their pockets, so they were as mad upon their running after quacks and mountebanks, and every practising old woman for medicines and remedies, storing themselves with such multitudes of pills, potions, and preservatives, as they were called, that they not only spent their money but poisoned themselves beforehand for fear of the poison of the infection, and prepared their bodies for the plague instead of preserving them against it. On the other hand, it was incredible, and scarce to be imagined, how the posts of houses and corners of streets were plastered over with doctors' bills, and papers of ignorant fellows quacking and tampering in physic, and inviting people to come to them for remedies, which was generally set off with such flourishes as these, viz., INFALLIBLE preventitive pills against the plague. NEVER-FAILING preservatives against the infection. SOVEREIGN cordials against the corruption of air. EXACT regulation for the conduct of the body in case of infection. ANTIPESTILENTIAL pills. INCOMPARABLE drink against the plague, never found out before. An UNIVERSAL remedy for the plague. The ONLY TRUE plague-water. The ROYAL ANTIDOTE against all kinds of infection: and such a number more that I cannot reckon up, and if I could, would fill a book of themselves to set them down.

Others set up bills to summon people to their lodgings for direction and advice in the case of infection; these had specious titles also, such as these:

An eminent High-Dutch physician, newly come over from Holland, where he resided during all the time of the great plague, last year, in Amsterdam, and cured multitudes of people that actually had the plague upon them.

An Italian gentlewoman just arrived from Naples, having a choice secret to prevent infection, which she found out by her great experience, and did wonderful cures with it in the late plague there, wherein there died 20,000 in one day.

An ancient gentlewoman having practised with great success in the late plague in this city, anno 1636, gives her advice only to the female sex. To be spoken with, &c.

An experienced physician, who has long studied the doctrine of antidotes against all sorts of poison and infection, has, after forty years' practice, arrived at such skill as may, with God's blessing, direct persons how to prevent being touched by any contagious distemper whatsoever. He directs the poor gratis.

I take notice of these by way of specimen; I could give you two or three dozen of the like, and yet have abundance left behind. It is sufficient from these to apprise any one of the humour of those times, and how a set of thieves and pickpockets not only robbed and cheated the poor people of their money, but poisoned their bodies with odious and fatal preparations; some with mercury, and some with other things as bad, perfectly remote from the thing pretended to, and rather hurtful than serviceable to the body in case an infection followed.

I cannot omit a subtlety of one of those quack operators with which he gulled the poor people to crowd about him, but did nothing for them without money. He had, it seems, added to his bills, which he gave out in the streets, this advertisement in capital letters, viz., He gives advice to the poor for nothing.

Abundance of people came to him accordingly, to whom he made a great many fine speeches, examined them of the state of their health, and of the constitution of their bodies, and told them many good things to do which were of no great moment; but

the issue and conclusion of all was, that he had a preparation, which, if they took such a quantity of, every morning, he would pawn his life that they should never have the plague, no, though they lived in the house with people that were infected. This made the people all resolve to have it, but then, the price of that was so much, I think it was half-a-crown; But, sir, says one poor woman, I am a poor almswoman, and am kept by the parish, and your bills say, you give the poor your help for nothing. Ay, good woman, says the doctor, so I do, as I published there, I give my advice, but not my physic! Alas, sir, says she, that is a snare laid for the poor then, for you give them your advice for nothing; that is to say, you advise them gratis, to buy your physic for their money, so does every shopkeeper his wares. Here the woman began to give him ill words, and stood at his door all that day, telling her tale to all the people that came, till the doctor, finding she turned away his customers, was obliged to call her up stairs again and gave her his box of physic for nothing, which, perhaps too, was good for nothing when she had it.

But, to return to the people, whose confusions fitted them to be imposed upon by all sorts of pretenders and by every mountebank. There is no doubt but these quacking sort of fellows raised great gains out of the miserable people, for we daily found the crowds that ran after them were infinitely greater, and their doors were more thronged than those of Dr. Brooks, Dr. Upton, Dr. Hodges, Dr. Berwick, or any, though the most famous men of the time; and I was told that some of them got 5*l.* a day by their physic.

But there was still another madness beyond all this, which may serve to give an idea of the distracted humour of the poor people at that time, and this was their following a worse sort of deceivers than any of these, for these petty thieves only deluded them to pick their pockets and get their money, in which their wickedness, whatever it was, lay chiefly on the side of the deceiver's deceiving, not upon the deceived; but in this part I am going to mention, it lay chiefly in the people deceived, or equally in both; and

this was in wearing charms, philters, exorcisms, amulets, and I know not what preparations to fortify the body against the plague, as if the plague was not the hand of God, but a kind of a possession of an evil spirit, and it was to be kept off with crossings, signs of the zodiac, papers tied up with so many knots, and certain words or figures written on them, as particularly the word Abracadabra, formed in triangle or pyramid, thus:

A B R A C A D A B R A
A B R A C A D A B R
A B R A C A D A B
A B R A C A D A
A B R A C A D
A B R A C A
A B R A C
A B R A
A B R
A B
A

Others had the Jesuits' mark in a cross:

I H S

Others had nothing but this mark, thus:

+

I might spend a great deal of my time in exclamations against the follies, and indeed the wickedness of those things, in a time of such danger, in a matter of such consequence as this of a national infection; but my memorandums of these things relate rather to take notice of the fact, and mention only that it was so. How the poor people found the insufficiency of those things, and how many of them were afterwards carried away in the dead-carts, and thrown into the common graves of every parish with these hellish charms and trumpery hanging about their necks, remains to be spoken of as we go along.

All this was the effect of the hurry the people were in, after the first notion of the plague being at hand was among them, and which may be said to be from about Michaelmas, 1664, but more particularly after the two men died in St. Giles's in the beginning of December; and again after another alarm in February, for when

the plague evidently spread itself, they soon began to see the folly of trusting to these unperforming creatures, who had gulled them of their money, and then their fears worked another way, namely, to amazement and stupidity, not knowing what course to take or what to do, either to help or to relieve themselves, but they ran about from one neighbour's house to another, and even in the streets, from one door to another, with repeated cries of, Lord, have mercy upon us, what shall we do?

I am supposing now the plague to have begun, as I have said, and that the magistrates began to take the condition of the people into their serious consideration; what they did as to the regulation of the inhabitants, and of infected families, I shall speak to by itself; but, as to the affair of health, it is proper to mention here my having seen the foolish humour of the people in running after quacks, mountebanks, wizards, and fortune-tellers, which they did as above even to madness. The lord mayor, a very sober and religious gentleman, appointed physicians and surgeons for the relief of the poor, I mean the diseased poor, and, in particular, ordered the college of physicians to publish directions for cheap remedies for the poor in all the circumstances of the distemper. This indeed was one of the most charitable and judicious things that could be done at that time, for this drove the people from haunting the doors of every disperser of bills, and from taking down blindly and without consideration, poison for physic, and death instead of life.

This direction of the physicians was done by a consultation of the whole college, and as it was particularly calculated for the use of the poor, and for cheap medicines, it was made public, so that everybody might see it, and copies were given gratis to all that desired it: but as it is public and to be seen on all occasions, I need not give the reader of this the trouble of it.

XVIII.

HENRY ST. JOHN, VISCOUNT BOLINGBROKE.

(1678–1751.)

LETTERS ON THE STUDY AND USE OF HISTORY.

[Written in 1735.]

OF THE STUDY OF HISTORY.

Letter II.

Concerning the true use and advantages of it.

Let me say something of history in general before I descend into the consideration of particular parts of it, or of the various methods of study, or of the different views of those that apply themselves to it, as I had begun to do in my former letter.

The love of history seems inseparable from human nature because it seems inseparable from self-love. The same principle in this instance carries us forward and backward, to future and to past ages. We imagine that the things which affect us, must affect posterity: this sentiment runs through mankind, from Cæsar down to the parish clerk in Pope's Miscellany. We are fond of preserving, as far as it is in our frail power, the memory of our own adventures, of those of our own time, and of those that preceded it. Rude heaps of stone have been raised, and ruder hymns have been composed for this purpose, by nations who had not yet the use of arts and letters. To go no farther back, the triumphs of Odin were celebrated in runic songs, and the feats of our British ancestors were recorded in those of their bards. The

savages of America have the same custom at this day: and long historical ballads of their huntings and their wars are sung at all their festivals. There is no need of saying how this passion grows, among civilized nations, in proportion to the means of gratifying it: but let us observe that the same principle of nature directs us as strongly, and more generally as well as more early, to indulge our own curiosity, instead of preparing to gratify that of others. The child hearkens with delight to the tales of his nurse: he learns to read, and he devours with eagerness fabulous legends and novels: in riper years he applies himself to history, or to that which he takes for history, to authorized romance: and, even in age, the desire of knowing what has happened to other men, yields to the desire alone of relating what has happened to ourselves. Thus history, true or false, speaks to our passions always. What pity is it, my lord, that even the best should speak to our understanding so seldom? That it does so, we have none to blame but ourselves. Nature has done her part. She has opened this study to every man who can read and think: and what she has made the most agreeable, reason can make the most useful, application of our minds. But if we consult our reason, we shall be far from following the examples of our fellow-creatures, in this as in most other cases, who are so proud of being rational. We shall neither read to soothe our indolence, nor to gratify our vanity: as little shall we content ourselves to drudge like grammarians and critics, that others may be able to study with greater ease and profit, like philosophers and statesmen: as little shall we affect the slender merit of becoming great scholars at the expense of groping all our lives in the dark mazes of antiquity. All these mistake the true drift of study, and the true use of history. Nature gave us curiosity to excite the industry of our minds; but she never intended it should be made the principal, much less the sole, object of their application. The true and proper object of this application is a constant improvement in private and in public virtue. An application to any study, that tends neither directly nor indirectly to make us better men and better citizens,

is at best but a specious and ingenious sort of idleness, to use an expression of Tillotson: and the knowledge we acquire by it is a creditable kind of ignorance, nothing more. This creditable kind of ignorance is, in my opinion, the whole benefit which the generality of men, even the most learned, reap from the study of history: and yet the study of history seems to me, of all others the most proper to train us up to private and public virtue.

Your lordship may very well be ready by this time, and after so much bold censure on my part, to ask me, what then is the true use of history? in what respects it may serve to make us better and wiser? and what method is to be pursued in the study of it, for attaining these great ends? I will answer you by quoting what I have read somewhere or other, in Dionysius Halicarn,[1] I think, that history is philosophy teaching by examples. We need but to cast our eyes on the world, and we shall see the daily force of example: we need but to turn them inward, and we shall soon discover why example has this force: "*Pauci prudentia*," says Tacitus, "*honesta ab deterioribus, utilia ab noxiis discernunt: plures aliorum eventis docentur.*"[2] Such is the imperfection of human understanding, such the frail temper of our minds, that abstract or general propositions, though ever so true, appear obscure or doubtful to us very often, till they are explained by examples: and that the wisest lessons in favour of virtue go but a little way to convince the judgment, and determine the will, unless they are enforced by the same means; and we are obliged to apply to ourselves what we see happen to other men. Instructions by precept have the further disadvantage of coming on the authority of others, and frequently require a long deduction of reasoning. "*Homines amplius oculis, quam auribus, credunt: longum iter est per præcepta, breve et efficax per exempla.*"[3] The

[1] Halicarnassensis, *i.e.*, of Halicarnassus in Caria, a district of Asia Minor.

[2] *Few by prudence distinguish good from bad, the useful from the injurious; more are taught by the fortunes of others.* — TACITUS, *Annals*, IV. 33.

[3] *Men believe more from seeing than hearing; the way is long by precepts, short and effective by examples.* — SENECA, *Epistles*, 6, 5.

reason of this judgment, which I quote from one of Seneca's epistles, in confirmation of my own opinion rests, I think, on this; that when examples are pointed out to us, there is a kind of appeal, with which we are flattered, made to our senses, as well as our understandings. The instruction comes then upon our own authority: we frame the precept after our own experience, and yield to fact, when we resist speculation. But this is not the only advantage of instruction by example; for example appeals not to our understanding alone, but to our passions likewise. Example assuages these, or animates them; sets passion on the side of judgment, and makes the whole man of a piece, which is more than the strongest reasoning and the clearest demonstration can do: and thus forming habits by repetition, example secures the observance of those precepts which example insinuated. Is it not Pliny, my lord, who says, that the gentlest, he should have added the most effectual, way of commanding, is by example? "*Mitius jubetur exemplo.*"[4] The harshest orders are softened by example, and tyranny itself becomes persuasive. What pity it is that so few princes have learned this way of commanding? But again: the force of examples is not confined to those alone that pass immediately under our sight: the examples that memory suggests, have the same effect in their degree, and an habit of recalling them will soon produce the habit of imitating them. In the same epistle, from whence I cited a passage just now, Seneca says that Cleanthes had never become so perfect a copy of Zeno, if he had not passed his life with him; that Plato, Aristotle, and the other philosophers of that school profited more by the example, than by the discourse of Socrates. (But here, by the way, Seneca mistook; for Socrates died two years according to some, and four years, according to others, before the birth of Aristotle:[5] and his mistake might come from the inaccuracy of those who collected for him; as Erasmus

[4] Lit., *it is commanded more gently by example.* — PLINY. [Cf. PLINY, *Panegyricus*, XLV. 6.: *Melius homines exemplis docentur* = *Men are taught better by examples.*]

[5] Socrates died B.C. 399; Aristotle was born B.C. 384.

observes, after Quintilian, in his judgment on Seneca.) But be this, which was scarce worth a parenthesis, as it will; he adds that Metrodorus, Hermachus and Polyænus, men of great note, were formed by living under the same roof with Epicurus, not by frequenting his school. These are instances of the force of immediate example. But your lordship knows that the citizens of Rome placed the images of their ancestors in the vestibule of their houses; so that, whenever they went in or out, these venerable bustoes met their eyes, and recalled the glorious actions of the dead, to fire the living, to excite them to imitate, and even to emulate their great forefathers. The success answered the design. The virtue of one generation was transfused, by the magic of example, into several: and a spirit of heroism was maintained through many ages of that commonwealth. Now these are so many instances of the force of remote example; and from all these instances we may conclude that examples of both kinds are necessary.

The school of example, my lord, is the world: and the masters of this school are history and experience. I am far from contending that the former is preferable to the latter. I think upon the whole otherwise: but this I say, that the former is absolutely necessary to prepare us for the latter, and to accompany us whilst we are under the discipline of the latter, that is, through the whole course of our lives. No doubt some few men may be quoted, to whom nature gave what art and industry can give to no man. But such examples will prove nothing against me, because I admit that the study of history, without experience, is insufficient; but assert that experience itself is so without genius. Genius is preferable to the other two; but I would wish to find the three together: for how great soever a genius may be, and how much soever he may acquire new light and heat, as he proceeds in his rapid course, certain it is that he will never shine with the full lustre, nor shed the full influence he is capable of, unless to his own experience he adds the experience of other men and other ages. Genius, without the improvement, at least, of experience, is

what comets once were thought to be, a blazing meteor, irregular in his course, and dangerous in his approach; of no use to any system, and able to destroy any. Mere sons of earth, if they have experience without any knowledge of the history of the world, are but half scholars in the science of mankind. And if they are conversant in history without experience, they are worse than ignorant; they are pedants, always incapable, sometimes meddling and presuming. The man who has all three, is an honour to his country, and a public blessing: and such, I trust, your lordship will be in this century, as your great-grandfather[6] was in the last.

I have insisted a little the longer on this head, and have made these distinctions the rather, because though I attribute a great deal more than many will be ready to allow to the study of history; yet I would not willingly even seem to fall into the ridicule of ascribing to it such extravagant effects as several have done, from Tully down to Casaubon, La Mothe le Vayer, and other modern pedants. When Tully informs us, in the second book of his Tusculan disputations, that the first Scipio Africanus had always in his hands the works of Xenophon,[7] he advances nothing but what is probable and reasonable. To say nothing of the retreat of the ten thousand, nor of other parts of Xenophon's writings; the images of virtue, represented in that admirable picture of Cyropædia, were proper to entertain a soul that was fraught with virtue, and Cyrus was worthy to be imitated by Scipio. So Selim emulated Cæsar, whose Commentaries were translated for his use, against the customs of the Turks: so Cæsar emulated Alexander; and Alexander, Achilles. There is nothing ridiculous here, except the use that is made of this passage by those who quote it. But what the same Tully says, in the fourth [second] book of his academical disputations, concerning Lucullus, seems to me very extraordinary: "*In Asiam factus imperator*

[6] The Earl of Clarendon.

[7] Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, Book II., Chap. 26 (Sect. 62), referring to Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, I. 6, 25.

venit, cum esset Roma profectus rei militaris rudis," (one would be ready to ascribe so sudden a change, and so vast an improvement, to nothing less than knowledge infused by inspiration, if we were not assured in the same place that they were effected by very natural means, by such as it is in every man's power to employ) "*partim percontando a peritis, partim in rebus gestis legendis.*" [8] Lucullus, according to this account, verified the reproach on the Roman nobility, which Sallust puts into the mouth of Marius. But as I discover the passion of Marius, and his prejudices to the patricians, in one case; so I discover, methinks, the cunning of Tully, and his partiality to himself, in the other. Lucullus, after he had been chosen consul, obtained by intrigue the government of Cilicia, and so put himself into a situation of commanding the Roman army against Mithridates: Tully had the same government afterwards, and though he had no Mithridates, nor any other enemy of consequence, opposed to him; though all his military feats consisted in surprising and pillaging a parcel of Highlanders and wild Cilicians; yet he assumed the airs of a conqueror, and described his actions in so pompous a style, that the account becomes burlesque. He laughs, indeed, in one of his letters to Atticus, at his generalship: but if we turn to those he writ to Cœlius Rufus, and to Cato, upon this occasion, or to those wherein he expresses to Atticus his resentment against Cato, for not proposing in his favour the honors usually decreed to conquerors, we may see how vanity turned his head, and how impudently he insisted on obtaining a triumph. Is it any strain now to suppose, that he meant to insinuate, in the passage I have quoted about Lucullus, that the difference between him and the former governor of Cilicia, even in military merit, arose from the different conjuncture alone; and that Lucullus could not have done in Cilicia, at that time, more than he himself did? Cicero had read and questioned at least as much as Lucullus, and would

[8] *Though he had started from Rome inexperienced in military affairs, he came into Asia having been made a general; partly by inquiring of those who were skilled, partly by reading history.* — CICERO, *Acad.*, II. 1, 1.

therefore have appeared as great a captain, if he had had as great a prince as Mithridates to encounter. But the truth is, that Lucullus was made a great captain by theory, or the study of history, alone, no more than Ferdinand of Spain and Alphonsus of Naples were cured of desperate distempers by reading Livy and Quintus Curtius: a silly tale, which Bodin, Amyot, and others have picked up and propagated. Lucullus had served in his youth against the Marsi, probably in other wars, and Sylla took early notice of him: he went into the east with this general, and had a great share in his confidence. He commanded in several expeditions. It was he who restored the Colophonians to their liberty and who punished the revolt of the people of Mytelene. Thus we see that Lucullus was formed by experience, as well as study, and by an experience gained in those very countries, where he gathered so many laurels afterwards in fighting against the same enemy. The late duke of Marlborough never read Xenophon, most certainly, nor the relation perhaps of any modern wars; but he served in his youth under monsieur de Turenne, and I have heard that he was taken notice of in those early days by that great man. He afterwards commanded in an expedition to Ireland, served a campaign or two, if I mistake not, under king William in Flanders: and besides these occasions, had none of gaining experience in war, till he came to the head of our armies in one thousand seven hundred and two, and triumphed, not over Asiatic troops, but over the veteran armies of France. The Roman had on his side genius and experience cultivated by study: the Briton had genius improved by experience, and no more. The first therefore is not an example of what study can do alone; but the latter is an example of what genius and experience can do without study. They can do much, to be sure, when the first is given in a superior degree. But such examples are very rare: and when they happen, it will be still true, that they would have had fewer blemishes, and would have come nearer to the perfection of private and public virtue, in all the arts of peace and achievements of war, if the views of such men had been enlarged, and their senti-

ments ennobled, by acquiring that cast of thought, and that temper of mind, which will grow up and become habitual in every man who applies himself early to the study of history, as well as to the study of philosophy, with the intention of being wiser and better, without the affectation of being more learned.

The temper of the mind is formed, and a certain turn given to our ways of thinking; in a word, the seeds of that moral character which cannot wholly alter the natural character, but may correct the evil and improve the good that is in it, or do the very contrary, are sown betimes, and much sooner than is commonly supposed. It is equally certain that we shall gather or not gather experience, be the better or the worse for this experience, when we come into the world and mingle amongst mankind, according to the temper of mind, and the turn of thought, that we have acquired beforehand, and bring along with us. They will tincture all our future acquisitions; so that the very same experience, which secures the judgment of one man, or excites him to virtue, shall lead another into error, or plunge him into vice. From hence it follows, that the study of history has in this respect a double advantage. If experience alone can make us perfect in our parts, experience cannot begin to teach them till we are actually on the stage: whereas, by a previous application to this study, we con them over at least, before we appear there: we are not quite unprepared, we learn our parts sooner, and we learn them better.

Let me explain what I mean by an example. There is scarce any folly or vice more epidemical among the sons of men, than that ridiculous and hurtful vanity, by which the people of each country are apt to prefer themselves to those of every other; and to make their own customs, and manners, and opinions, the standards of right and wrong, of true and false. The Chinese mandarins were strangely surprised, and almost incredulous, when the Jesuits showed them how small a figure their empire made in the general map of the world. The Samojedes wondered much at the Czar of Muscovy for not living among them: and the Hot-

tentot, who returned from Europe, stripped himself naked as soon as he came home, put on his bracelets of guts and garbage, and grew stinking and lousy as fast as he could. Now nothing can contribute more to prevent us from being tainted with this vanity, than to accustom ourselves early to contemplate the different nations of the earth in that vast map which history spreads before us, in their rise and their fall, in their barbarous and civilized states, in the likeness and unlikeness of them all to one another, and of each to itself. By frequently renewing this prospect to the mind, the Mexican with his cap and coat of feathers, sacrificing a human victim to his god, will not appear more savage to our eyes, than the Spaniard with an hat on his head, and a *gonilla*[11] round his neck, sacrificing whole nations to his ambition, his avarice, and even the wantonness of his cruelty. I might shew, by a multitude of other examples, how history prepares us for experience, and guides us in it: and many of these would be both curious and important. I might likewise bring several other instances, wherein history serves to purge the mind of those national partialities and prejudices that we are apt to contract in our education, and that experience for the most part rather confirms than removes: because it is for the most part confined, like our education. But I apprehend growing too prolix, and shall therefore conclude this head by observing, that though an early and proper application to the study of history will contribute extremely to keep our minds free from a ridiculous partiality in favor of our own country, and a vicious prejudice against others; yet the same study will create in us a preference of affection to our own country. There is a story told of Abgarus.[9] He brought several beasts taken in different places to Rome, they say, and let them loose before Augustus: every beast ran immediately to that part of the Circus, where a parcel of earth taken from his native soil had been laid. "*Credat Judæus Apella.*"[10] This tale might pass on Josephus; for in him, I believe, I read it: but surely the love of our country is a lesson

[9] Title of the kings of Edessa in Mesopotamia, as Pharaoh in Egypt.

[10] *Let the Jew Apella believe it.* — HORACE, *Satires*, I. 5. 100.

[11] *cape?*

of reason, not an institution of nature. Education and habit, obligation and interest, attach us to it, not instinct. It is however so necessary to be cultivated, and the prosperity of all societies, as well as the grandeur of some, depends upon it so much, that orators by their eloquence, and poets by their enthusiasm, have endeavoured to work up this precept of morality into a principle of passion. But the examples which we find in history, improved by the lively descriptions, and the just applauses or censures of historians, will have a much better and more permanent effect, than declamation, or song, or the dry ethics of mere philosophy. In fine, to converse with historians is to keep good company: many of them were excellent men, and those who were not such, have taken care however to appear such in their writings. It must be therefore of great use to prepare ourselves by this conversation for that of the world; and to receive our first impressions, and to acquire our first habits, in a scene where images of virtue and vice are continually represented to us in the colors that belong properly to them, before we enter on another scene, where virtue and vice are too often confounded, and what belongs to one is ascribed to the other.

Besides the advantage of beginning our acquaintance with mankind sooner, and of bringing with us into the world and the business of it, such a cast of thought and such a temper of mind, as will enable us to make a better use of our experience; there is this further advantage in the study of history, that the improvement we make by it extends to more objects, and is made at the expence of other men: whereas that improvement, which is the effect of our own experience, is confined to fewer objects, and is made at our own expence. To state the account fairly therefore between these two improvements; though the latter be the more valuable, yet allowance being made on one side for the much greater number of examples that history presents to us, and deduction being made on the other of the price we often pay for our experience, the value of the former will rise in proportion. "I have recorded these things," says Polybius, after giving an

account of the defeat of Regulus, "that they who read these commentaries may be rendered better by them; for all men have two ways of improvement, one arising from their own experience, and one from the experience of others." "*Evidentior quidem illa est, quæ per propria ducit infortunia; at tutior illa, quæ per aliena.*"[12] I use Casaubon's translation. Polybius goes on and concludes, "that since the first of these ways exposes us to great labor and peril, whilst the second works the same good effect, and is attended by no evil circumstance, every one ought to take for granted, that the study of history is the best school where he can learn how to conduct himself in all the situations of life." Regulus had seen at Rome many examples of magnanimity, of frugality, of the contempt of riches and of other virtues; and these virtues he practised. But he had not learned, nor had opportunity of learning another lesson, which the examples recorded in history inculcate frequently, the lesson of moderation. An insatiable thirst of military fame, and unconfined ambition of extending their empire, an extravagant confidence in their own courage and force, an insolent contempt of their enemies, and impetuous over-bearing spirit with which they pursued all their enterprises, composed in his days the distinguishing character of a Roman. Whatever the senate and people resolved, to the members of that commonwealth appeared both practicable and just. Neither difficulties nor dangers could check them; and their sages had not yet discovered that virtues in excess degenerate into vices. Notwithstanding the beautiful rant which Horace puts into his mouth, I make no doubt that Regulus learned at Carthage those lessons of moderation which he had not learned at Rome; but he learned them by experience, and the fruits of this experience came too late and cost too dear; for they cost the total defeat of the Roman army, the prolongation of a calamitous war which might have been finished by a glorious peace, the loss of liberty to thou-

[12] *That* [*experience*] *is indeed plainer which arises through our own misfortunes, but that is safer which arises through those of others.* — Polybius, translated by *Casaubon*.

sands of Roman citizens, and to Regulus himself, the loss of life in the midst of torments, if we are to credit what is perhaps exaggeration in the Roman authors.

There is another advantage, worthy our observation, that belongs to the study of history; and that I shall mention here, not only because of the importance of it, but because it leads me immediately to speak of the nature of the improvement we ought to have in our view, and of the method in which it seems to me that this improvement ought to be pursued: two particulars from which your lordship may think perhaps that I digress too long. The advantage I mean consists in this, that the examples which history presents to us, both of men and of events, are generally complete: the whole example is before us, and consequently the whole lesson, or sometimes the various lessons, which philosophy proposes to teach us by this example. For first, as to men; we see them at their whole length in history, and we see them generally there through a medium less partial at least than that of experience: for I imagine that a whig or a tory, whilst those parties subsisted, would have condemned in Saturninus the spirit of faction which he applauded in his own tribunes, and would have applauded in Drusus the spirit of moderation which he despised in those of the contrary party, and which he suspected and hated in those of his own party. The villain who has imposed on mankind by his power or cunning, and whom experience could not unmask for a time, is unmasked at length: and the honest man, who has been misunderstood or defamed, is justified before his story ends. Or if this does not happen, if the villain dies with his mask on, in the midst of applause, and honor, and wealth, and power, and if the honest man dies under the same load of calumny and disgrace under which he lived, driven perhaps into exile, and exposed to want; yet we see historical justice executed, the name of one branded with infamy, and that of the other celebrated with panegyric to succeeding ages. "*Præcipuum munus annalium reor, ne virtutes sileantur, utque pravis dictis factisque ex poster-*

itate et infamia metus sit."[12] Thus, according to Tacitus, and according to truth, from which his judgments seldom deviate, the principal duty of history is to erect a tribunal, like that among the Egyptians, mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, where men and princes themselves were tried, and condemned or acquitted, after their deaths; where those who had not been punished for their crimes, and those who had not been honored for their virtues, received a just retribution. The sentence is pronounced in one case, as it was in the other, too late to correct or recompense; but it is pronounced in time to render these examples of general instruction to mankind. Thus Cicero, that I may quote one instance out of thousands, and that I may do justice to the general character of that great man, whose particular failing I have censured so freely; Cicero, I say, was abandoned by Octavius, and massacred by Antony. But let any man read this fragment of Arellius Fuscus, and choose which he would wish to have been, the orator, or the triumvir? "*Quoad humanum genus incolume manserit, quamdiu usus literis, honor summæ eloquentiæ pretium erit, quamdiu rerum natura aut fortuna steterit, aut memoria duraverit, admirabile posteris vigebis ingenium, et uno proscriptus seculo, proscribes Antonium omnibus.*"[13]

Thus again, as to events that stand recorded in history, we see them all, we see them as they followed one another, or as they produced one another, causes or effects, immediate or remote. We are cast back, as it were, into former ages: we live with the men who lived before us, and we inhabit countries that we never saw. Place is enlarged, and time prolonged, in this manner; so that the man who applies himself early to the study of

[13] *I esteem it the chief office of annals that virtues be not kept silent, and that men may fear wicked words and deeds by reason of posterity and ill report.* — TACITUS, *Annals*, III. 65.

[14] *As long as the human race shall exist, as long as literature shall prevail, as long as honor shall be the reward of the highest eloquence, as long as nature or fortune shall stand, or memory endure, you will be esteemed by posterity a wonderful intellect, and though proscribed in one age, you will proscribe Antony in all.* — ARELLIUS FUSCUS.

history, may acquire in a few years, and before he sets his foot abroad in the world, not only a more extended knowledge of mankind, but the experience of more centuries than any of the patriarchs saw. The events we are witnesses of, in the course of the longest life, appear to us very often original, unprepared, single, and un-relative, if I may use such an expression for want of a better in English; in French I would say *isolés*: they appear such very often, are called accidents, and looked on as the effects of chance; a word, by the way, which is in constant use, and has frequently no determinate meaning. We get over the present difficulty, we improve the momentary advantage, as well as we can, and we look no farther. Experience can carry us no farther; for experience can go a very little way back in discovering causes: and effects are not the objects of experience till they happen. From hence many errors in judgment, and by consequence in conduct, necessarily arise. And here too lies the difference we are speaking of between history and experience. The advantage on the side of the former is double. In ancient history, as we have said already, the examples are complete, which are incomplete in the course of experience. The beginning, the progression, and the end appear, not of particular reigns, much less of particular enterprizes, or systems of policy alone, but of governments, of nations, of empires, and of all the various systems that have succeeded one another in the course of their duration. In modern history, the examples may be, and sometimes are, incomplete; but they have this advantage when they are so, that they serve to render complete the examples of our own time. Experience is doubly defective; we are born too late to see the beginning, and we die too soon to see the end of many things. History supplies both these defects. Modern history shews the causes, when experience presents the effects alone: and ancient history enables us to guess at the effects, when experience presents the causes alone. Let me explain my meaning by two examples of these kinds; one past, the other actually present.

When the revolution of one thousand six hundred and eighty-

eight happened, few men then alive, I suppose, went farther in their search after the causes of it, than the extravagant attempt of king James against the religion and liberty of his people. His former conduct, and the passages of king Charles the second's reign might rankle still at the hearts of some men, but could not be set to account among the causes of his deposition; since he had succeeded, notwithstanding them, peaceably to the throne: and the nation in general, even many of those who would have excluded him from it, were desirous, or at least, willing, that he should continue in it. Now this example, thus stated, affords, no doubt, much good instruction to the kings and people of Britain. But this instruction is not entire, because the example thus stated, and confined to the experience of that age, is imperfect. King James's mal-administration rendered a revolution necessary and practicable; but his mal-administration, as well as all his preceding conduct, was caused by his bigot-attachment to popery, and to the principles of arbitrary government, from which no warning could divert him. His bigot-attachment to these was caused by the exile of the royal family, this exile was caused by the usurpation of Cromwell: and Cromwell's usurpation was the effect of a former rebellion, begun not without reason on account of liberty, but without any valid pretence on account of religion. During this exile, our princes caught the taint of popery and foreign politics. We made them unfit to govern us, and after that were forced to recal them that they might rescue us out of anarchy. It was necessary therefore, your lordship sees, at the revolution, and it is more so now, to go back in history, at least as far as I have mentioned, and perhaps farther, even to the beginning of king James the first's reign, to render this event a complete example, and to develop all the wise, honest and salutary precepts, with which it is pregnant, both to the king and subject.

The other example shall be taken from what has succeeded the revolution. Few men at that time looked forward enough, to foresee the necessary consequences of the new constitution of the revenue that was soon afterwards formed; nor of the method of

funding that immediately took place; which, absurd as they are, have continued ever since, till it is become scarce possible to alter them. Few people, I say, foresaw how the creation of funds, and the multiplication of taxes, would increase yearly the power of the crown, and bring our liberties, by a natural and necessary progression, into more real, though less apparent danger, than they were in before the revolution. The excessive ill husbandry practised from the beginning of king William's reign, and which laid the foundations of all we feel and all we fear, was not the effect of ignorance, mistake, or what we call chance, but of design and scheme in those who had the sway at that time. I am not so uncharitable, however, as to believe that they intended to bring upon their country all the mischiefs that we, who came after them, experience, and apprehend. No, they saw the measures they took singly, and unrelatively, or relatively alone to some immediate object. The notion of attaching men to the new government, by tempting them to embark their fortunes on the same bottom, was a reason of state to some: the notion of creating a new, that is, a moneyed interest, in opposition to the landed interest, or as a balance to it, and of acquiring a superior influence in the city of London at least by the establishment of great corporations, was a reason of party to others: and I make no doubt that the opportunity of amassing immense estates by the management of funds, by trafficking in paper, and by all the arts of jobbing, was a reason of private interest to those who supported and improved this scheme of iniquity, if not to those who devised it. They looked no farther. Nay, we who came after them, and have long tasted the bitter fruits of the corruption they planted, were far from taking such an alarm at our distress, and our danger, as they deserved; till the most remote and fatal effect of causes, laid by the last generation, was very near becoming an object of experience in this. Your lordship, I am sure, sees at once how much a due reflection on the passages of former times, as they stand recorded in the history of our own, and of other countries, would have deterred a free people from trusting the

sole management of so great a revenue, and the sole nomination of those legions of officers employed in it, to their chief magistrate. There remained indeed no pretence for doing so, when once a salary was settled on the prince, and the public revenue was no longer in any sense his revenue, nor the public expence his expence. Give me leave to add, that it would have been, and would be still, more decent with regard to the prince, and less repugnant if not more conformable to the principle and practice too of our government, to take this power and influence from the prince, or to share it with him; than to exclude men from the privilege of representing their fellow-subjects who would chuse them in parliament, purely because they are employed and trusted by the prince.

Your lordship sees not only how much a due reflection upon the experience of other ages and countries would have pointed out national corruption, as the natural and necessary consequence of investing the crown with the management of so great a revenue; but also the loss of liberty, as the natural and necessary consequence of national corruption.

These two examples explain sufficiently what they are intended to explain. It only remains therefore upon this head, to observe the difference between two manners in which history supplies the defects of our own experience. It shows us causes as in fact they were laid, with their immediate effects: and it enables us to guess at future events. It can do no more, in the nature of things. My lord Bacon, in his second book of the Advancement of Learning, having in his mind, I suppose, what Philo and Josephus asserted of Moses, affirms divine history to have this prerogative, that the narration may be before the fact as well as after. But since the ages of prophecy, as well as miracles, are past, we must content ourselves to guess at what will be by what has been: we have no other means in our power, and history furnishes us with these. How we are to improve, and apply these means as well as how we are to acquire them, shall be deduced more particularly in another letter.

XIX.

DAVID HUME.

(1711–1776.)

ESSAYS, MORAL, POLITICAL, AND LITERARY.

[Published in 1742.]

Essay XIII. — Of Eloquence.

Those who consider the periods and revolutions of human kind, as represented in history, are entertained with a spectacle full of pleasure and variety, and see, with surprise, the manners, customs, and opinions of the same species susceptible of such prodigious changes in different periods of time. It may, however, be observed, that in *civil* history there is found a much greater uniformity than in the history of learning and science, and that the wars, negotiations, and politics of one age, resemble more those of another, than the taste, wit, and speculative principles. Interest and ambition, honour and shame, friendship and enmity, gratitude and revenge, are the prime movers in all public transactions; and these passions are of a very stubborn and intractable nature, in comparison of the sentiments and understanding, which are easily varied by education and example. The Goths were much more inferior to the Romans in taste and science than in courage and virtue.

But not to compare together nations so widely different; it may be observed, that even this later period of human learning is, in many respects, of an opposite character to the ancient; and that, if we be superior in philosophy, we are still, notwithstanding all our refinements, much inferior in eloquence.

In ancient times, no work of genius was thought to require so great parts and capacity as the speaking in public; and some eminent writers have pronounced the talents, even of a great poet or philosopher, to be of an inferior nature to those which are requisite for such an undertaking. Greece and Rome produced, each of them, but one accomplished orator; and whatever praises the other celebrated speakers might merit, they were still esteemed much inferior to these great models of eloquence. It is observable that the ancient critics could scarcely find two orators in any age, who deserved to be placed precisely in the same rank, and professed the same degree of merit. Calvus, Cœlius, Curio, Hortensius, Cæsar, rose one above another; but the greatest of that age was inferior to Cicero, the most eloquent speaker that had ever appeared in Rome. Those of fine taste, however, pronounced this judgment of the Roman orator, as well as of the Grecian, that both of them surpassed in eloquence all that had ever appeared, but that they were far from reaching the perfection of their art, which was infinite, and not only exceeded human force to attain, but human imagination to conceive. Cicero declares himself dissatisfied with his own performances; nay, even with those of Demosthenes; *Ita sunt avidæ et capaces* [*meæ aures*], says he, *et semper aliquid immensum, infinitumque desiderant.*[1]

Of all the polite and learned nations, England alone professes a popular government, or admits into the legislature such numerous assemblies as can be supposed to lie under the dominion of eloquence. But what has England to boast of in this particular? In enumerating the great men who have done honour to our country, we exult in our poets and philosophers; but what orators are ever mentioned? Or where are the monuments of their genius to be met with? there are found, indeed, in our histories, the names of several, who directed the resolutions of our parliament: But neither themselves nor others have taken the pains to preserve the

[1] *My ears are so greedy and capacious, and always long for something immense and infinite.* — CICERO, *Orator*, 29 (104).

speeches; and the authority, which they professed, seems to have been owing to their experience, wisdom, or power, more than to their talents for oratory. At present there are above half a dozen speakers in the two houses, who, in the judgment of the public, have reached very near the same pitch of eloquence; and no man pretends to give any one the preference above the rest. This seems to me a certain proof that none of them have attained much beyond a mediocrity in their art, and that the species of eloquence, which they aspire to, gives no exercise to the sublimer faculties of the mind, but may be reached by ordinary talents and a slight application. A hundred cabinet-makers in London can work a table or a chair equally well; but no one poet can write verses with such spirit and elegance as Mr. Pope.

We are told that, when Demosthenes was to plead, all ingenious men flocked to Athens from the most remote parts of Greece, as to the most celebrated spectacle of the world.[2] At London you may see men sauntering in the court of requests, while the most important debate is carrying on in the two houses; and many do not think themselves sufficiently compensated for the losing of their dinners by all the eloquence of our most celebrated speakers. When old Cibber is to act, the curiosity of several is more excited than when our prime minister is to defend himself from a motion for his removal or impeachment.

Even a person unacquainted with the noble remains of ancient orators, may judge from a few strokes that the style or species of their eloquence was infinitely more sublime than that which modern orators aspire to. How absurd would it appear, in our temperate and calm speakers, to make use of an *Apostrophe*, like that noble one of Demosthenes, so much celebrated by Quintilian and Longinus, when justifying the unsuccessful battle of Chæronea, he breaks out, "No, my Fellow Citizens, No: You have not erred. I swear by the names of those heroes, who fought for the same cause in the plains of Marathon and Platæa!" Who could now endure such a bold and poetical figure as that which Cicero em-

[2] Cicero, *De Claris Oratoribus*, 84 (289).

ploys, after describing in the most tragical terms the crucifixion of a Roman citizen: "Should I paint the horrors of this scene, not to Roman citizens, not to the allies of our state, not to those who have ever heard of the Roman Name, not even to men, but to brute creatures; or, to go farther, should I lift up my voice in the most desolate solitude, to the rocks and mountains, yet should I surely see those rude and inanimate parts of nature moved with horror and indignation at the recital of so enormous an action?"[3] With what a blaze of eloquence must such a sentence be surrounded to give it grace, or cause it to make any impression on the hearers? And what noble art and sublime talents are requisite to arrive, by just degrees, at a sentiment so bold and excessive: to inflame the audience, so as to make them accompany the speaker in such violent passions, and such elevated conceptions; and to conceal, under a torrent of eloquence, the artifice by which all this is effectuated! Should this sentiment even appear to us excessive, as perhaps it justly may, it will at least serve to give an idea of the stile of ancient eloquence, where such swelling expressions were not rejected as wholly monstrous and gigantic.

Suitable to this vehemence of thought and expression, was the vehemence of action, observed in the ancient orators. The *supplosio pedis*, or stamping with the foot, was one of the most usual and moderate gestures which they made use of;[4] though that is now esteemed too violent, either for the senate, bar, or pulpit, and is only admitted into the theatre to accompany the most violent passions, which are there represented.

One is somewhat at a loss to what cause we may ascribe so sensible a decline of eloquence in later ages. The genius of mankind at all times, is, perhaps, equal. The moderns have applied themselves, with great industry and success, to all the other arts and sciences: and a learned nation possesses a popular government; a circumstance which seems requisite for the full display of these noble talents: but notwithstanding all these advantages, our

[3] Cicero, *Against Verres*.

[4] Cicero, *De Claris Oratoribus*, 38 (141).

progress in eloquence is very inconsiderable, in comparison of the advances which we have made in all other parts of learning.

Shall we assert that the strains of ancient eloquence are unsuitable to our age, and ought not to be imitated by modern orators? Whatever reasons may be made use of to prove this, I am persuaded they will be found, upon examination, to be unsound and unsatisfactory.

First, it may be said, that, in ancient times, during the flourishing period of Greek and Roman learning, the municipal laws, in every state, were but few and simple, and the decision of causes was, in a great measure, left to the equity and common sense of the judges. The study of the laws was not then a laborious occupation, requiring the drudgery of a whole life to finish it, and incompatible with every other study or profession. The great statesmen and generals among the Romans were all lawyers, and Cicero, to shew the facility of acquiring this science, declares that in the midst of all his occupations, he would undertake, in a few days, to make himself a complete civilian. Now, where a pleader addresses himself to the equity of his judges, he has much more room to display his eloquence than where he must draw his arguments from strict laws, statutes, and precedents. In the former case many circumstances must be taken in; many personal considerations regarded; and even favour and inclination, which it belongs to the orator by his art and eloquence to conciliate, may be disguised under the appearance of equity. But how shall a modern lawyer have leisure to quit his toilsome occupations, in order to gather the flowers of Parnassus? Or what opportunity shall he have of displaying them amidst the rigid and subtle arguments, objections and replies, which he is obliged to make use of? The greatest genius, and greatest orator, who should pretend to plead before the Chancellor, after a month's study of the laws, would only labour to make himself ridiculous.

I am ready to own that this circumstance, of the multiplicity and intricacy of laws, is a discouragement to eloquence in modern times. But I assert that it will not entirely account for the decline

of that noble art. It may banish oratory from Westminster-Hall, but not from either house of parliament. Among the Athenians, the Areopagites expressly forbade all allurements of eloquence; and some have pretended that in the Greek orations, written in the *judiciary* form, there is not so bold and rhetorical a style as appears in the Roman. But to what a pitch did the Athenians carry their eloquence in the *deliberative* kind, when affairs of state were canvassed, and the liberty, happiness, and honour of the republic were the subject of debate? Disputes of this nature elevate the genius above all others, and give the fullest scope to eloquence; and such disputes are very frequent in this nation.

Secondly, it may be pretended that the decline of eloquence is owing to the superior good sense of the moderns, who reject with disdain all those rhetorical tricks employed to seduce the judges, and will admit of nothing but solid argument in any debate of deliberation. If a man be accused of murder, the fact must be proved by witnesses and evidence; and the laws will afterwards determine the punishment of the criminal. It would be ridiculous to describe, in strong colours, the horror and cruelty of the action: to introduce the relations of the dead; and at a signal, make them throw themselves at the feet of the judges, imploring justice with tears and lamentations: and still more ridiculous would it be, to employ a picture representing the bloody deed, in order to move the judges by the display of so tragical a spectacle, though we know that this artifice was sometimes practised by the pleaders of old.[5] Now, banish the pathetic from public discourses, and you reduce the speakers merely to modern eloquence; that is, to good sense delivered in proper expression.

Perhaps it may be acknowledged that our modern customs, or our superior good sense, if you will, should make our orators more cautious and reserved than the ancient, in attempting to inflame the passions, or elevate the imagination of their audience: but I see no reason why it should make them despair absolutely of succeeding in that attempt. It should make them redouble their

[5] QUINTILIAN, Book VI., Chap. I.

art, not abandon it entirely. The ancient orators seem also to have been on their guard against this jealousy of their audience; but they took a different way of eluding it.[6] They hurried away with such a torrent of sublime and pathetic that they left their hearers no leisure to perceive the artifice, by which they were deceived. Nay, to consider the matter aright, they were not deceived by any artifice. The orator, by the force of his own genius and eloquence, first inflamed himself with anger, indignation, pity, sorrow, and then communicated those impetuous movements to his audience.

Does any man pretend to have more good sense than Julius Cæsar? yet that haughty conqueror, we know, was so subdued by the charms of Cicero's eloquence that he was, in a manner, constrained to change his settled purpose and resolution, and to absolve a criminal, whom, before that orator pleaded, he was determined to condemn.

Some objections, I own, notwithstanding his vast success, may lie against some passages of the Roman orator. He is too florid and rhetorical: His figures are too striking and palpable: the divisions of his discourse are drawn chiefly from the rules of the schools: and his wit disdains not always the artifice even of a pun, rhyme, or jingle of words. The Grecian addressed himself to an audience much less refined than the Roman senate or judges. The lowest vulgar of Athens were his sovereigns and the arbiters of his eloquence.[7] Yet is his manner more chaste and austere than that of the other. Could it be copied, its success would be infallible over a modern assembly. It is rapid harmony, exactly adjusted to the sense: it is vehement reasoning, without any appearance of art: it is disdain, anger, boldness, freedom, involved in a continued stream of argument: and of all human productions, the orations of Demosthenes present to us the models which approach the nearest to perfection.

[6] LONGINUS, Chap. XV.

[7] "The orators formed the taste of the Athenian people, not the people of the orators." — From HUME'S note.

Thirdly, it may be pretended that the disorders of the ancient governments, and the enormous crimes of which the citizens were often guilty, afforded much ampler matter for eloquence than can be met with among the moderns. Were there no Verres or Catiline, there would be no Cicero. But that this reason can have no great influence, is evident. It would be easy to find a Philip in modern times; but where shall we find a Demosthenes?

What remains, then, but that we lay the blame on the want of genius, or of judgment in our speakers, who either found themselves incapable of reaching the heights of ancient eloquence, or rejected all such endeavours as unsuitable to the spirit of modern assemblies? A few successful attempts of this nature might rouze the genius of the nation, excite the emulation of the youth, and accustom our ears to a more sublime and more pathetic elocution than what we have been hitherto entertained with. There is certainly something accidental in the first rise and the progress of the arts in any nation. I doubt whether a very satisfactory reason can be given why ancient Rome, though it received all its refinements from Greece, could attain only to a relish for statuary, painting, and architecture, without reaching the practice of these arts: while modern Rome has been excited by a few remains found among the ruins of antiquity, and has produced artists of the greatest eminence and distinction. Had such a cultivated genius for oratory, as Waller's for poetry, arisen, during the civil wars, when liberty began to be fully established, and popular assemblies to enter into all the most material points of governments; I am persuaded so illustrious an example would have given a quite different turn to British eloquence, and made us reach the perfection of the ancient model. Our orators would then have done honour to their country, as well as our poets, geometers, and philosophers, and British Ciceros have appeared, as well as British Archimedeses and Virgils.

It is seldom or never found, when a false taste in poetry or eloquence prevails among any people, that it has been preferred to a true, upon comparison and reflection. It commonly prevails

merely from ignorance of the true, and from the want of perfect models, to lead men into a juster apprehension, and more refined relish of those productions of genius. When *these* appear, they soon unite all suffrages in their favour, and, by their natural and powerful charms, gain over even the most prejudiced, to the love and admiration of them. The principles of every passion, and of every sentiment, is [*sic*] in every man; and when touched properly, they rise to life, and warm the heart, and convey that satisfaction, by which a work of genius is distinguished from the adulterate beauties of a capricious wit and fancy. And if this observation be true with regard to all the liberal arts, it must be peculiarly so with regard to eloquence; which, being merely calculated for the public, and for men of the world, cannot, with any pretence of reason, appeal from the people to more refined judges; but must submit to the public verdict, without reserve or limitation. Whoever, upon comparison, is deemed by a common audience the greatest orator, ought most certainly to be pronounced such by men of science and erudition. And though an indifferent speaker may triumph for a long time, and be esteemed altogether perfect by the vulgar, who are satisfied with his accomplishments, and know not in what he is defective; yet, whenever the true genius arises, *he* draws to him the attention of every one, and immediately appears superior to his rival.

Now to judge by this rule, ancient eloquence, that is, the sublime and passionate, is of a much juster taste than the modern, or the argumentative and rational; and, if properly executed, will always have more command and authority over mankind. We are satisfied with our mediocrity, because we have had no experience of anything better; but the ancients had experience of both, and upon comparison, gave the preference to that kind of which they have left us such applauded models. For, if I mistake not, our modern eloquence is of the same style or species with that which ancient critics denominated Attic eloquence, that is, calm, elegant, and sublime, which instructed the reason more than affected the passions, and never raised its tone above argument or common

discourse. Such was the eloquence of Lysias among the Athenians, and of Calvus among the Romans. These were esteemed in their time; but when compared with Demosthenes and Cicero, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of a meridian sun. Those latter orators possessed the same elegance, and sublimity, and force of argument, with the former; but what rendered them chiefly admirable, was that pathetic and sublime, which, on proper occasions, they threw into their discourse, and by which they commanded the resolution of their audience.

Of this species of eloquence we have scarcely had any instance in England, at least in our public speakers. In our writers, we have had some instances, which have met with great applause, and might assure our ambitious youth of equal or superior glory in attempts for the revival of ancient eloquence. Lord Bolingbroke's productions, with all their defects in argument, method, and precision, contain a force and energy, which our orators scarcely ever aim at; though it is evident that such an elevated style has much better grace in a speaker than in a writer, and is assured of more prompt and more astonishing success. It is there seconded by the graces of voice and action: the movements are mutually communicated between the orator and the audience: and the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the discourse of one man, must inspire him with a peculiar elevation, sufficient to give a propriety to the strongest figures and expressions. It is true, there is a great prejudice against *set speeches;* and a man cannot escape ridicule who repeats a discourse as a school-boy does his lesson, and takes no notice of anything that has been advanced in the course of the debate. But where is the necessity of falling into this absurdity? A public speaker must know beforehand the question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections, and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse.[8] If anything now occurs, he may supply

[8] "The first of the Athenians, who composed and wrote his speeches was Pericles, a man of business and a man of sense, if ever there was one. *πρῶτος γραπτὸν λόγον ἐν δικαστηρίῳ εἶπε, τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ σχεδιαζόντων.* [He first spoke

it from his invention; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions. The mind naturally continues with the same *impetus* or *force* which it has acquired by its motion; as a vessel, once impelled by the oars, carries on its course for some time, when the original impulse is suspended.

I shall conclude this subject with observing, that, even though our modern orators should not elevate their style, or aspire to a rivalship with the ancient; yet is there, in most of their speeches, a material defect, which they might correct without departing from that composed air of argument and reasoning to which they limit their ambition. Their great affectation of extemporary discourses has made them reject all order and method, which seems so requisite to argument, and without which it is scarcely possible to produce an entire conviction on the mind. It is not that one would recommend many divisions in a public discourse, unless the subject very evidently offer them: but it is easy, without this formality, to observe a method, and make that method conspicuous to the hearers, who will be infinitely pleased to see the arguments rise naturally from one another, and will retain a more thorough persuasion than can arise from the strongest reasons which are thrown together in confusion.

Essay XXII. — Of Tragedy.

It seems an unaccountable pleasure, which the spectators of a well-written tragedy receive from sorrow, terror, anxiety, and other passions, that are in themselves disagreeable and uneasy. The more they are touched and affected, the more are they delighted with the spectacle; and as soon as the uneasy passions cease to operate, the piece is at an end. One scene of full joy and contentment and security, is the utmost that any composition of this kind can bear; and it is sure always to be the conclud-

a written speech in court, as his predecessors spoke extempore.] Suidas on Pericles." — Hume's note.

ing one. If, in the texture of the piece, there be interwoven any scenes of satisfaction, they afford only faint gleams of pleasure, which are thrown in by way of variety, and in order to plunge the actors into deeper distress by means of that contract and disappointment. The whole art of the poet is employed in rouzing and supporting the compassion and indignation, the anxiety and resentment of his audience. They are pleased in proportion as they are afflicted, and never are so happy as when they employ tears, sobs, and cries, to give vent to their sorrow and relieve their heart, swoln with the tenderest sympathy and compassion.

The few critics who have had some tincture of philosophy, have remarked this singular phenomenon, and have endeavoured to account for it.

L'Abbé Dubos, in his reflections on poetry and painting, asserts that nothing is in general so disagreeable to the mind as the languid, listless state of indolence, into which it falls upon the removal of all passion and occupation. To get rid of this painful situation, it seeks every amusement and pursuit; business, gaming, shews, executions; whatever will rouze the passions, and take its attention from itself. No matter what the passion is: let it be disagreeable, afflicting, melancholy, disordered, it is still better than that insipid languor which arises from perfect tranquillity and repose.

It is impossible not to admit this account, as being, at least in part, satisfactory. You may observe, when there are several tables of gaming, that all the company run to those where the deepest play is, even though they find not there the best players. The view, or, at least, imagination of high passions, arising from great loss or gain, affects the spectator by sympathy, gives him some touches of the same passions, and serves him for a momentary entertainment. It makes the time pass the easier with him, and is some relief to that oppression, under which men commonly labour, when left entirely to their own thoughts and meditations.

We find that common liars always magnify, in their narrations, all kinds of danger, pain, distress, sickness, deaths, murders, and

cruelties; as well as joy, beauty, mirth, and magnificence. It is an absurd secret which they have for pleasing their company, fixing their attention, and attaching them to such marvellous relations by the passions and emotions which they excite.

There is, however, a difficulty in applying to the present subject, in its full extent, this solution, however ingenious and satisfactory it may appear. It is certain that the same object of distress, which pleases in a tragedy, were it really set before us, would give the most unfeigned uneasiness, though it be then the most effectual cure to languor and indolence. Monsieur Fontenelle seems to have been sensible of this difficulty; and accordingly attempts another solution of the phenomenon; at least makes some addition to the theory above mentioned.[9]

"Pleasure and pain," says he, "which are two sentiments so "different in themselves, differ not so much in their cause. From "the instance of tickling, it appears that the movement of pleas-"ure, pushed a little too far, becomes pain; and that the move-"ment of pain, a little moderated, becomes pleasure. Hence it "proceeds that there is such a thing as a sorrow, soft and agree-"able: it is a pain weakened and diminished. The heart likes "naturally to be moved and affected. Melancholy objects suit "it, and even disastrous and sorrowful, provided that they are "softened by some circumstance. It is certain that on the "theatre, the representation has almost the effect of reality; yet "it has not altogether that effect. However we may be hurried "away by the spectacle; whatever dominion the senses and im-"agination may usurp over the reason, there still lurks at the "bottom a certain idea of falsehood in the whole of what we see. "This idea, though weak and disguised, suffices to diminish the "pain which we suffer from the misfortunes of those whom we "love, and to reduce that affliction to such a pitch as converts "it into a pleasure. We weep for the misfortune of a hero, to "whom we are attached. In the same instant we comfort our-"selves by reflecting that it is nothing but a fiction: and it is

[9] *Reflections sur la poëtique*, § 36.

"precisely that mixture of sentiments, which composes an agree-
"able sorrow, and tears that delight us. But as that affliction,
"which is caused by exterior and sensible objects, is stronger than
"the consolation which arises from an internal reflection, they
"are the effects and symptoms of sorrow that ought to predomi-
"nate in the composition."

This solution seems just and convincing; but perhaps it wants still some new addition, in order to make it answer fully the phenomenon, which we here examine. All the passions, excited by eloquence, are agreeable in the highest degree, as well as those which are moved by painting and the theatre. The epilogues of Cicero are, on this account chiefly, the delight of every reader of taste; it is difficult to read some of them without the deepest sympathy and sorrow. His merit as an orator, no doubt, depends much on his success in this particular. When he had raised tears in his judges and all his audience, they were then the most highly delighted, and expressed the greatest satisfaction with the pleader. The pathetic description of the butchery made by Verres of the Sicilian captains, is a masterpiece of this kind: but I believe more will affirm that the being present at a melancholy scene of that nature would afford any entertainment. Neither is the sorrow here softened by fiction: for the audience were convinced of the reality of every circumstance. What is it then, which in this case raises a pleasure from the bosom of uneasiness, so to speak; and a pleasure, which still retains all the features and outward symptoms of distress and sorrow?

I answer: this extraordinary effect proceeds from that very eloquence, with which the melancholy scene is represented. The genius required to paint objects in a lively manner, the art employed in collecting all the pathetic circumstances, the judgment displayed in disposing them: the exercise, I say, of these noble talents, together with the force of expression, and beauty of oratorial numbers, diffuse the highest satisfaction on the audience, and excite the most delightful movements. By this means, the uneasiness of the melancholy passions is not only overpowered

and effaced by something stronger of an opposite kind; but the whole impulse of those passions is converted into pleasure, and swells the delight which the eloquence raises in us. The same force of oratory, employed on an uninteresting subject, would not please half so much, or rather would appear altogether ridiculous, and the mind, being left in absolute calmness and indifference, would relish none of those beauties of imagination or expression which, if joined to passion, give it such exquisite entertainment. The impulse or vehemence, arising from sorrow, compassion, indignation, receives a new direction from the sentiments of beauty. The latter, being the predominant emotion, seize the whole mind, and convert the former into themselves, at least tincture them so strongly as totally to alter their nature. And the soul, being, at the same time, rouzed by passion, and charmed by eloquence, feels on the whole a strong movement, which is altogether delightful.

The same principle takes place in tragedy; with this addition, that tragedy is an imitation; and imitation is always of itself agreeable. This circumstance serves still farther to smooth the motions of passion, and convert the whole feeling into one uniform and strong enjoyment. Objects of the greatest terror and distress please in painting, and please more than the most beautiful objects, that appear calm and indifferent. The affection, rouzing the mind, excites a large flock of spirit and vehemence; which is all transformed into pleasure by the force of the prevailing movement. It is thus the fiction of tragedy softens the passion by an infusion of a new feeling, not merely by weakening or diminishing the sorrow. You may by degrees weaken a real sorrow till it totally disappears; yet in none of its gradations will it ever give pleasure; except, perhaps, by accident, to a man sunk under lethargic indolence, whom it rouzes from that languid state.

To confirm this theory, it will be sufficient to produce other instances, where the subordinate movement is converted into the predominant, and gives force to it, though of a different, and even sometimes though of a contrary nature.

Novelty naturally rouzes the mind and attracts our attention; and the movements, which it causes, are always converted into any passion belonging to the object, and join their force to it. Whether an event excite joy or sorrow, pride or shame, anger or good-will, it is sure to produce a stronger affection, when new or musical. And though novelty of itself be agreeable, it fortifies the painful, as well as agreeable passions.

Had you any intention to move a person extremely by the narration of any event, the best method of increasing its effect would be artfully to delay informing him of it, and first to excite his curiosity and impatience before you let him into the secret. This is the artifice practised by Iago in the famous scene of Shakespeare; and every spectator is sensible that Othello's jealousy acquires additional force from his preceding impatience, and that the subordinate passion is here readily transformed into the predominant one.

Difficulties increase passions of every kind, and by rouzing our attention, and exciting our active powers, they produce an emotion, which nourishes the prevailing affection.

Parents commonly love that child most, whose sickly, infirm frame of body has occasioned them the greatest pains, trouble, and anxiety in rearing him. The agreeable sentiment of affection here acquires force from sentiments of uneasiness.

Nothing endears so much a friend as sorrow for his death. The pleasure of his company has not so powerful an influence.

Jealousy is a painful passion: yet without some share of it, the agreeable affection of love has difficulty to subsist in its full force and violence. Absence is also a great source of complaint among lovers and gives them the greatest uneasiness: yet nothing is more favourable to their mutual passion than short intervals of that kind; and if long intervals often prove fatal, it is only because, through time, men are accustomed to them, and they cease to give uneasiness. Jealousy and absence in love compose the *dolce peccante* of the Italians, which they suppose so essential to all pleasure.

There is a fine observation of the elder Pliny, which illustrates the principle here insisted on. "It is very remarkable," says he, "that the last works of celebrated artists which they left imperfect, are always the most prized, such as the Iris of Aristides, the Tyndarides of Nicomachus, the Medea of Timomachus, and the Venus of Apelles. These are valued even above their finished productions: the broken lineaments of the piece, and the half-formed idea of the painter are carefully studied, and our very grief for that curious hand, which had been stopped by death, is an additional increase to our pleasure."[10]

These instances (and many more might be collected) are sufficient to afford us some insight into the analogy of nature and to show us that the pleasure, which poets, orators, and musicians give us, by exciting grief, sorrow, indignation, compassion, is not so extraordinary or paradoxical, as it may at first sight appear. The force of imagination, the energy of expression, the power of numbers, the charms of imitation; all these are naturally of themselves delightful to the mind: and when the object presented lays also hold of some affection, the pleasure still rises upon us by the conversion of their subordinate movement into that which is predominant. The passion, though, perhaps, naturally, and when excited by the simple appearance of a real object, it may be painful; yet is so smoothed and softened, and mollified, when raised by the finer arts, that it affords the highest entertainment.

To confirm this reasoning, we may observe, that if the movements of the imagination be not predominant above those of the passion, a contrary effect follows; and the former, being now subordinate, is converted into the latter, and still farther increases the pain and affliction of the sufferer.

Who could ever think of it as a good expedient for comforting an afflicted parent, to exaggerate, with all the force of elocution, the irreparable loss which he has met with by the death of a favourite child? The more power of imagination and expression you here employ, the more you increase his despair and affliction.

[10] PLINY, Book XXXV., Chap. 11.

The shame, confusion, and terror of Verres, no doubt, rose in proportion to the noble eloquence and vehemence of Cicero: so also did his pain and uneasiness. These former passions were too strong for the pleasure arising from the beauties of elocution; and operated, though from the same principle, yet in a contrary manner, to the sympathy, compassion, and indignation of the audience.

Lord Clarendon, when he approaches towards the catastrophe of the royal party, supposes that his narration must then become infinitely disagreeable; and he hurries over the king's death without giving us one circumstance of it. He considers it as too horrid a scene to be contemplated with any satisfaction, or even without the utmost pain and aversion. He himself, as well as the readers of that age, were too deeply concerned in the events, and felt a pain from subjects, which an historian and a reader of another age would regard as the most pathetic and most interesting, and, by consequence, the most agreeable.

An action, represented in tragedy, may be too bloody and atrocious. It may excite such movements of horror as will not soften into pleasure; and the greatest energy of expression, bestowed on descriptions of that nature, serves only to augment our uneasiness. Such is that action represented in the *Ambitious Step-mother*, where a venerable old man, raised to the height of fury and despair, rushes against a pillar, and striking his head upon it, besmears it all over with mingled brains and gore. The English theatre abounds too much with such shocking images.

Even the common sentiments of compassion require to be softened by some agreeable affection, in order to give a thorough satisfaction to the audience. The mere suffering of plaintive virtue, under the triumphant tyranny and oppression of vice, forms a disagreeable spectacle, and is carefully avoided by all masters of the drama. In order to dismiss the audience with entire satisfaction and contentment, the virtue must either convert itself into a noble courageous despair, or the vice receive its proper punishment.

Most painters appear in this light to have been very unhappy in their subjects. As they wrought much for churches and convents, they have chiefly represented such horrible subjects as crucifixions and martyrdoms, where nothing appears but tortures, wounds, executions, and passive suffering, without any action or affection. When they turned their pencil from this ghastly mythology, they had commonly recourse to Ovid, whose fictions, though passionate and agreeable, are scarcely natural or probable enough for painting.

The same inversion of that principle, which is here insisted on, displays itself in common life, as in the effects of oratory and poetry. Raise so the subordinate passion that it becomes predominant, it swallows up that affection which it before nourished and increased. Too much jealousy extinguishes love; too much difficulty renders us indifferent; too much sickness and infirmity disgusts a selfish and unkind parent.

What so disagreeable as the dismal, gloomy, disastrous stories, with which melancholy people entertain their companions? The uneasy passion being there raised alone, unaccompanied with any spirit, genius, or eloquence, conveys a pure uneasiness, and is attended with nothing that can soften it into pleasure or satisfaction.

XX.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

(1728–1774.)

ESSAYS.

[Published in 1765.]

Essay XXI. — On the Use of Metaphors.

Of all the implements of poetry, the Metaphor is the most generally and successfully used, and indeed may be termed the Muse's *caduceus*,[1] by the power of which she enchants all nature. The metaphor is a shorter simile, or rather a kind of magical coat, by which the same idea assumes a thousand different appearances. Thus the word *plough*, which originally belongs to agriculture, being metaphorically used, represents the motion of a ship at sea, and the effects of old age upon the human countenance —

> ". . . Plough'd the bosom of the deep — "
> " And time had plough'd his venerable front."

Almost every verb, noun substantive, or term of art in any language, may be in this manner applied to a variety of subjects with admirable effect; but the danger is in sowing metaphors too thick, so as to distract the imagination of the reader, and incur the imputation of deserting nature, in order to hunt after conceits. Every day produces poems of all kinds so inflated with metaphor, that they may be compared to the gaudy bubbles blown up from a solution of soap. Longinus is of opinion, that a multitude of metaphors is never excusable, except in those cases when the passions are roused, and like a winter torrent rush down im-

[1] The rod of Hermes (Mercury), the herald of the gods, which possessed magic powers.

petuous, sweeping them with collective force along. He brings an instance of the following quotation from Demosthenes: "Men," says he, "profligates, miscreants, and flatterers, who having severally preyed upon the bowels of their country, at length betrayed her liberty, first to Philip, and now again to Alexander; who, placing the chief felicity of life in the indulgence of infamous lusts and appetites, overturned in the dust that freedom and independence which was the chief aim and end of all our worthy ancestors."

Aristotle and Theophrastus seem to think it is rather too bold and hazardous to use metaphors so freely, without interposing some mitigating phrase, such as, "If I may be allowed the expression," or some equivalent excuse. At the same time, Longinus finds fault with Plato for hazarding some metaphors, which indeed appear to be equally affected and extravagant, when he says, "the government of a state should not resemble a bowl of hot fermenting wine, but a cool and moderate beverage *chastised by the sober deity*," — a metaphor that signifies nothing more than "mixed or lowered with water." Demetrius Phalereus justly observes, that "though a judicious use of metaphors wonderfully raises, sublimes, and adorns oratory or elocution, yet they should seem to flow naturally from the subject; and too great a redundancy of them inflates the discourse to a mere rhapsody." The same observation will hold in poetry; and the more liberal or sparing use of them will depend in a great measure on the nature of the subject.

Passion itself is very figurative, and often bursts out into metaphors; but in touching the pathos, the poet must be perfectly well acquainted with the emotions of the human soul, and carefully distinguish between those metaphors which rise glowing from the heart, and those cold conceits which are engendered in the fancy. Should one of these last unfortunately intervene, it will be apt to destroy the whole effect of the most pathetical incident or situation. Indeed, it requires the most delicate taste and a consummate knowledge of propriety to employ metaphors in such a manner as to avoid what the ancients call the τὸ ψυχρὸν, the frigid, or false sublime. Instances of this kind were frequent even among

the correct ancients. Sappho herself is blamed for using the hyperbole λευκοτέροι χίονος, whiter than snow. Demetrius is so nice as to be disgusted at the simile of *swift as the wind;* though in speaking of a race-horse, we know from experience that this is not even an hyperbole. He would have had more reason to censure that kind of metaphor which Aristotle styles κατ' ἐνέργειαν [forcible], exhibiting things inanimate as endued with sense and reason; such as that of the sharp-pointed arrow, *eager* to take wing among the crowd.

Ὀξυβελής, καθ' ὅμιλον ἐπιπτέσθαι μενεαίνων.[2]

Not but that, in descriptive poetry, this figure is often allowed and admired. The *cruel* sword, the *ruthless* dagger, the *ruffian* blast, are epithets which frequently occur. The *faithful* bosom of the earth, the *joyous* boughs, the trees that *admire their images* reflected in the stream, and many other examples of this kind, are found disseminated through the works of our best modern poets: yet still they must be sheltered under the privilege of the *poetica licentia;* and, except in poetry, they would give offence.

More chaste metaphors are freely used in all kinds of writing; more sparingly in history, and more abundantly in rhetoric: we have seen that Plato indulges in them even to excess. The orations of Demosthenes are animated and even inflamed with metaphors, some of them so bold as even to entail upon him the censure of the critics.

Τότε τῷ Πύθωνι τῷ ῥήτορι ῥέοντι καθ' ὑμῶν.[3]

"Then I did not yield to Python the orator, when he *overflowed* you with a tide of eloquence." Cicero is still more liberal in the use of them; he ransacks all nature, and pours forth a redundancy of figures, even with a lavish hand. Even the chaste Xenophon, who generally illustrates his subject by way of simile, sometimes ventures to produce an expressive metaphor, such as,

[2] HOMER, *Iliad*, IV. 126.

[3] After DEMOSTHENES, *On the Crown.* — Reiske, 272 (Bekker, 170), 19, 20.

"part of the phalanx *fluctuated* in the march"; and indeed nothing can be more significant than this word ἐξεκύμηνε[4] to represent a body of men staggered, and on the point of giving way. Armstrong has used the word *fluctuate* with admirable efficacy, in his philosophical poem, entitled, "The Art of Preserving Health."

> "O when the growling winds contend, and all
> The sounding forest *fluctuates* in the storm,
> To sink in warm repose, and hear the din
> Howl o'er the steady battlements —"

The word *fluctuate* on this occasion not only exhibits an idea of struggling, but also echoes to the sense like the ἔφριξεν δὲ μαχή[5] of Homer; which, by the by, it is impossible to render into English, for the verb φρίσσω signifies not only to stand erect like prickles, as a grove of lances, but also to make a noise like the crashing of armor, the hissing of javelins, and the splinters of spears.

Over and above excess of figures, a young author is apt to run into a confusion of mixed metaphors, which leave the sense disjointed, and distract the imagination. Shakspeare is often guilty of these irregularities. The soliloquy in Hamlet, which we have so often heard extolled in terms of admiration, is, in our opinion, a heap of absurdities, whether we consider the situation, the sentiment, the argumentation, or the poetry. Hamlet is informed by the Ghost that his father was murdered, and therefore he is tempted to murder himself, even after he had promised to take vengeance on the usurper, and expressed the utmost eagerness to achieve this enterprise. It does not appear that he had the least reason to wish for death; but every motive which may be supposed to influence the mind of a young prince, concurred to render life desirable — revenge towards the usurper; love for the fair Ophelia; and the ambition of reigning. Besides, when he had an opportunity of dying without being accessary to his

[4] Xenophon, *Anabasis*, I. 8, 18.

[5] *The line of battle bristled* [*with long spears*]. — Homer, *Iliad*, XIII. 339.

own death; when he had nothing to do but, in obedience to his uncle's command, to allow himself to be conveyed quietly to England where he was sure of suffering death; instead of amusing himself with meditations on mortality, he very wisely consulted the means of self-preservation, turned the tables upon his attendants, and returned to Denmark. But granting him to have been reduced to the lowest state of despondence, surrounded with nothing but honour and despair, sick of this life and eager to tempt futurity, we shall see how far he argues like a philosopher.

In order to support this general charge against an author so universally held in veneration, whose very errors have helped to sanctify his character among the multitude, we will descend to particulars, and analyze this famous soliloquy.

Hamlet, having assumed the disguise of madness, as a cloak under which he might the more effectually revenge his father's death upon the murderer and usurper, appears alone upon the stage in a pensive and melancholy attitude, and communes with himself in these words:

"To be, or not to be? that is the question: —"[6]

We have already observed that there is not any apparent circumstance in the fate or situation of Hamlet, that should prompt him to harbour one thought of self-murder; and therefore these expressions of despair imply an impropriety in point of character. But supposing his condition was truly desperate, and he saw no possibility of repose but in the uncertain harbour of death, let us see in what manner he argues on that subject. The question is, "To be, or not to be"; to die by my own hand, or live and suffer the miseries of life. He proceeds to explain the alternative in these terms, "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer, or endure the frowns of fortune, or to take arms, and by opposing, end them." Here he deviates from his first proposition, and death is no longer the question. The only doubt is, whether he will stoop to misfortune, or exert his faculties in order to surmount it. This

[6] Here follows the soliloquy, for which see *Hamlet*, III. 1, 56–88.

surely is the obvious meaning, and indeed the only meaning that can be implied in these words,

> "Whether 'tis nobler in the mind, to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing, end them."

He now drops this idea, and reverts to his reasoning on death, in the course of which he owns himself deterred from suicide by the thoughts of what may follow death:

> ". . . the dread of something after death, —
> That undiscovered country, from whose bourne
> No traveller returns."

This might be a good argument in a Heathen or Pagan, and such indeed Hamlet really was; but Shakspeare has already represented him as a good Catholic, who must have been acquainted with the truths of revealed religion, and says expressly in this very play,

> ". . . had not the Everlasting fix'd
> His canon 'gainst self-murder."

Moreover, he had just been conversing with his father's spirit, piping hot from purgatory, which, we would presume, is not within the *bourne* of this world. The dread of what may happen after death, says he,

> "Makes us rather bear the ills we have,
> Than fly to others that we know not of."

This declaration at least implies some knowledge of the other world, and expressly asserts that there must be *ills* in that world, though what kind of *ills* they are we do not know. The argument, therefore, may be reduced to this lemma: this world abounds with *ills* which I fear; the other world abounds with *ills*, the nature of which I do not know; therefore, I will rather bear those *ills* I have, "than fly to *others* which I know not of"; a deduction amounting to a certainty, with respect to the

only circumstance that should create a doubt, namely, whether in death he should rest from his misery; and if he was certain there were evils in the next world, as well as in this, he had no room to reason at all about the matter. What alone could justify his thinking on the subject, would have been the hope of flying from the ills of this world, without encountering any *others* in the next.

Nor is Hamlet more accurate in the following reflection:

"Thus conscience does make cowards of us all."

A bad conscience will make us cowards; but a good conscience will make us brave. It does not appear that anything lay heavy on his conscience; and from the premises we cannot help inferring, that conscience in this case was entirely out of the question. Hamlet was deterred from suicide by a full conviction, that, in flying from one sea of troubles which he did know, he should fall into another which he did not know.

His whole chain of reasoning, therefore, seems inconsistent and incongruous. "I am doubtful whether I should live, or do violence upon my own life; for I know not whether it is more honourable to bear misfortune patiently, than to exert myself in opposing misfortune, and by opposing, end it." Let us throw it into the form of a syllogism, it will stand thus: "I am oppressed with ills; I know not whether it is more honourable to bear those ills patiently, or to end them by taking arms against them; *ergo*, I am doubtful whether I should slay myself or live. To die, is no more than to sleep; and to *say* that by a sleep we end the heart-ache," &c., "'tis a consummation devoutly to be wished." Now to *say it*, was of no consequence unless it had been true. "I am afraid of the dreams that may happen in that sleep of death; and I choose rather to bear those ills I have in this life, than fly to *other ills* in that undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller ever returns. I have ills that are almost insupportable in this life. I know not what is in the next, because it is an undiscovered country: *ergo*, I had rather bear those ills I have, than fly

to others which I know not of." Here the conclusion is by no means warranted by the premises. "I am sore afflicted in this life; but I will rather bear the afflictions of this life, than plunge myself in the afflictions of another life; *ergo*, conscience makes cowards of us all." But this conclusion would justify the logician in saying, *negatur consequens*;[7] for it is entirely detached both from the major and minor proposition.

This soliloquy is not less exceptionable in the propriety of expression, than in the chain of argumentation. "To die — to sleep — no more," contains an ambiguity, which all the art of punctuation cannot remove; for it may signify that "to die" is to sleep no more; or the expression "no more," may be considered as an abrupt apostrophe in thinking, as if he meant to say "no more of that reflection." "Ay, there's the rub," is a vulgarism beneath the dignity of Hamlet's character, and the words that follow leave the sense imperfect:

> "For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,
> When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
> Must give us pause."

Not the dreams that might come, but the fear of what dreams might come, occasioned the pause or hesitation. *Respect* in the same line may be allowed to pass for consideration: but

> "The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,"

according to the invariable acceptation of the words *wrong* and *contumely*, can signify nothing but the wrongs sustained by the oppressor, and the contumely or abuse thrown upon the proud man; though it is plain that Shakspeare used them in a different sense: neither is the word *spurn* a substantive, yet as such he has inserted it in these lines:

> "The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes."

If we consider the metaphors of the soliloquy, we shall find them jumbled together in a strange confusion.

[7] *The conclusion is denied;* i.e. *does not follow from the premises.*

If the metaphors were reduced to painting, we should find it a very difficult task, if not altogether impracticable, to represent, with any propriety, outrageous fortune using her slings and arrows, between which indeed there is no sort of analogy in nature. Neither can any figure be more ridiculously absurd than that of a man taking arms against the sea, exclusive of the incongruous medley of slings, arrows, and seas, justled within the compass of one reflection. What follows is a strange rhapsody of broken images of sleeping, dreaming, and shifting off a *coil*, which last conveys no idea that can be represented on canvas. A man may be exhibited shuffling off his garments or his chains; but how he should shuffle off a *coil*, which is another term for noise and tumult, we cannot comprehend. Then we have "long-lived calamity," and "time armed with whips and scorn"; and "patient merit spurned at by unworthiness," and "misery with a bare bodkin going to make his own *quietus*," which at best is but a mean metaphor. These are followed by figures "sweating under fardels of burdens," "puzzled with doubts," "shaking with fears," and "flying from evils." Finally, we see "resolution sicklied o'er with pale thought," a conception like that of representing health by sickness; and a "current of pith turned awry so as to lose the name of action," which is both an error in fancy, and a solecism in sense. In a word, this soliloquy may be compared to the "*Ægri somnia*," and the "*Tabula, cujus vanæ finguntur species*."[8]

But while we censure the chaos of broken, incongruous metaphors, we ought also to caution the young poet against the opposite extreme, of pursuing a metaphor until the spirit is quite exhausted in a succession of cold conceits; such as we see in the following letter, said to be sent by Tamerlane to the Turkish Emperor Bajazet. "Where is the monarch that dares oppose our arms? Where is the potentate who doth not glory in being numbered among our vassals? As for thee, descended from a Tur-

[8] "*. . . a sick man's dreams*
Varies all shapes and mixes all extremes." —
FRANCIS. — PRIOR'S note.

coman mariner, since the vessel of thy unbounded ambition hath been wrecked in the gulf of thy self-love, it would be proper that thou shouldest furl the sails of thy temerity, and cast the anchor of repentance in the port of sincerity and justice, which is the harbour of safety; lest the tempest of our vengeance make thee perish in the sea of that punishment thou hast deserved."

But if these laboured conceits are ridiculous in poetry, they are still more inexcusable in prose: such as we find them frequently occur in Strada's Bellum Belgicum. "*Vix descenderat à prætoria navi Cæsar, cùm fœda ilico exorta in portu tempestas; classem impetu disjecit, prætoriam hausit; quasi non vecturam ampliùs Cæsarem Cæsarisque fortunam.*" "Cæsar had scarcely set his feet on shore, when a terrible tempest arising, shattered the fleet even in the harbour, and sent to the bottom the prætorian ship, as if he resolved it should no longer carry Cæsar and his fortunes."

Yet this is modest in comparison of the following flowers: "*Alii, pulsis è tormento catenis discerpti sectique, dimidiato corpore pugnabant sibi superstites, ac peremptæ partis ultores.*" "Others, dissevered and cut in twain by chain-shot, fought with one-half of their bodies that remained, in revenge of the other half that was slain."

Homer, Horace, and even the chaste Virgil, is not free from conceits. The latter, speaking of a man's hand cut off in battle, says:

> "*Te decisa suum, Laride, dextera quærit;*
> *Semianimesque micant digiti, ferrumque retractant,*"[9]

thus enduing the amputated hand with sense and volition. This, to be sure, is a violent figure, and hath been justly condemned by some accurate critics; but we think they are too severe in extending the same censure to some other passages in the most admired authors. Virgil, in his sixth Eclogue, says:

[9] "*Thy hand, poor Laris, sought its absent lord;*
Thy dying fingers, quiv'ring on the plain,
With starts convulsive grasp the steel in vain." —
DRYDEN. — PRIOR'S note. VIRGIL, *Æneid*, X. 395-6.

"*Omnia quæ, Phœbo quondam meditante, beatus*
Audiit Eurotas, jussitque ediscere lauros,
Ille canit."

"Whate'er, when Phœbus bless'd the Arcadian plain,
Eurotas heard and taught his bays the strain,
The senior sung — "[10]

And Pope has copied the conceit in his Pastorals:

"Thames heard the numbers as he flow'd along,
And bade his willows learn the moving song."

Vida thus begins his first Eclogue:

"*Dicite, vos musæ, et juvenum memorate querelas;*
Dicite: nam motas ipsas ad carmina cautes,
Et requiêsse suos perhibent vaga flumina cursus."

"Say, heavenly muse, their youthful frays rehearse;
Begin, ye daughters of immortal verse;
Exulting rocks have own'd the power of song,
And rivers listen'd as they flow'd along."

Racine adopts the same bold figure in his Phædra:

"*Le flot qui l'apporta recule epouvanté:*"

"The wave that bore him backwards shrunk appall'd."

Even Milton has indulged himself in the same license of expression:

". . . As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambic, off at sea north-east winds blow
Sabæan odor from the spicy shore
Of Araby the blest; with such delay
Well pleas'd they slack their course, and many a league,
Cheer'd with the grateful smell, old Ocean smiles."

Shakspeare says:

". . . I've seen
Th' ambitious ocean swell, and rage, and foam,
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds."[11]

[10] VIRGIL, *Eclogues*, VI. 82–84. [11] *Julius Cæsar*, I. 3, 6–8.

And indeed more correct writers, both ancient and modern, abound with the same kind of figure, which is reconciled to propriety, and even invested with beauty, by the efficacy of the prosopopœia, which personifies the object. Thus when Virgil says Enipeus heard the songs of Apollo, he raises up, as by enchantment, the idea of a river god crowned with sedges, his head raised above the stream, and in his countenance the expression of pleased attention. By the same magic we see, in the couplet quoted from Pope's Pastorals, old father Thames leaning upon his arm, and listening to the poet's strain.

Thus, in the regions of poetry all nature, even the passions and affections of the mind, may be personified into picturesque figures for the entertainment of the reader. Ocean smiles or frowns, as the sea is calm or tempestuous; a Triton rules on every angry billow; every mountain has its Nymph, every stream its Naiad, every tree its Hamadryad, and every art its Genius. We cannot, therefore, assent to those who censure Thomson as licentious for using the following figure:

> "O vale of bliss! O softly swelling hills!
> On which the power of cultivation lies,
> And joys to see the wonders of his toil."

We cannot conceive a more beautiful image than that of the genius of agriculture distinguished by the implements of his art, imbrowned with labour, glowing with health, crowned with a garland of foliage, flowers, and fruit, lying stretched at ease on the brow of a gently-swelling hill, and contemplating with pleasure the happy effects of his own industry.

Neither can we join issue against Shakspeare for his comparison, which hath likewise incurred the censure of the critics:

> ". . . The noble sister of Poplicola,
> The moon of Rome; chaste as the icicle
> That's curdled [curdied] by the frost from purest snow,
> And hangs on Dian's temple." [12]

[12] *Coriolanus*, V. 3, 64–7.

This is no more than illustrating a quality of the mind, by comparing it with a sensible object. If there is no impropriety in saying such a man is true as steel, firm as a rock, inflexible as an oak, unsteady as the ocean; or in describing a disposition cold as ice, or fickle as the wind; and these expressions are justified by constant practice; we shall hazard an assertion, that the comparison of a chaste woman to an icicle is proper and picturesque, as it obtains only in the circumstances of cold and purity: but that the addition of its being curdled from the purest snow, and hanging on the temple of Diana, the patroness of virginity, heightens the whole into a most beautiful simile, that gives a very respectable and amiable idea of the character in question.

The simile is no more than an extended metaphor, introduced to illustrate and beautify the subject; it ought to be apt, striking, properly pursued, and adorned with all the graces of poetical melody.

But a simile of this kind ought never to proceed from the mouth of a person under any great agitation of spirit; such as a tragic character overwhelmed with grief, distracted by contending cares, or agonizing in the pangs of death. The language of passion will not admit simile, which is always the result of study and deliberation. We will not allow a hero the privilege of a dying swan, which is said to chant its approaching fate in the most melodious strain: and therefore, nothing can be more ridiculously unnatural, than the representation of a lover dying upon the stage with a laboured simile in his mouth.

The orientals, whose language was extremely figurative, have been very careless in the choice of their similes; provided the resemblance obtained in one circumstance, they minded not whether they disagreed with the subject in every other respect. Many instances of this defect in congruity may be culled from the most sublime parts of Scripture.

Homer has been blamed for the bad choice of his similes on some particular occasions. He compares Ajax to an ass, in the Iliad, and Ulysses to a steak broiling on the coals, in the Odyssey.

His admirers have endeavoured to excuse him, by reminding us of the simplicity of the age in which he wrote; but they have not been able to prove that any ideas of dignity or importance were, even in those days, affixed to the character of an ass, or the quality of a beef-collop; therefore, they were very improper illustrations for any situation in which a hero ought to be represented.

Virgil has degraded the wife of king Latinus, by comparing her, when she was actuated by the Fury, to a top which the boys lash for diversion. This, doubtless, is a low image, though in other respects the comparison is not destitute of propriety; but he is much more justly censured for the following simile, which has no sort of reference to the subject. Speaking of Turnus, he says:

"*. . . medio dux agmine Turnus*
Vertitur arma tenens, et toto vertice suprà est,
Ceu septem surgens sedatis amnibus altus
Per tacitum Ganges: aut pingui flumine Nilus
Cum refluit campis, et jam se condidit alveo."

". . . But Turnus, chief amidst the warrior train,
In armour towers the tallest on the plain,
The Ganges thus by seven rich streams supplied,
A mighty mass devolves in silent pride:
Thus Nilus pours forth his prolific urn,
When from the fields o'erflowed his vagrant streams return." [13]

These, no doubt, are majestic images; but they bear no sort of resemblance to a hero glittering in armour at the head of his forces.

Horace has been ridiculed by some shrewd critics for this comparison, which, however, we think is more defensible than the former. Addressing himself to Munatius Plancus, he says:

"*Albus ut obscuro deterget nubila cælo*
Sæpe Notus, neque parturit imbres
Perpetuos; sic tu sapiens finire memento
Tristitiam, vitæque labores
Molli, Plance, mero.—"

[13] VIRGIL, *Æneid*, IX. 28–32.

"As Notus often, when the welkin lowers,
Sweeps off the clouds, nor teems perpetual showers,
So let thy wisdom, free from anxious strife,
In mellow wine dissolve the cares of life." — DUNKIN.[14]

The analogy, it must be confessed, is not very striking; but nevertheless, it is not altogether void of propriety. The poet reasons thus: as the south wind, though generally attended with rain, is often known to dispel the clouds, and render the weather serene; so do you, though generally on the rack of thought, remember to relax sometimes, and drown your cares in wine. As the south wind is not always moist, so you ought not always to be dry.

A few instances of inaccuracy, or mediocrity, can never derogate from the superlative merit of Homer and Virgil, whose poems are the great magazines, replete with every species of beauty and magnificence, particularly abounding with similes, which astonish, delight, and transport the reader.

Every simile ought not only to be well adapted to the subject, but also to include every excellence of description, and to be coloured with the warmest tints of poetry. Nothing can be more happily hit off than the following in the Georgics, to which the poet compares Orpheus lamenting his lost Eurydice.

"*Qualis populeâ mœrens Philomela sub umbrâ*
Amissos queritur fœtus, quos durus arator
Observans nido implumes detraxit; at illa
Flet noctem, ramoque sedens miserabile carmen
Integrat, et mœstis latè loca questibus implet."

"So Philomela, from th' umbrageous wood,
In strains melodious mourns her tender brood,
Snatch'd from the nest by some rude ploughman's hand,
On some lone bough the warbler takes her stand;
The live-long night she mourns the cruel wrong,
And hill and dale resound the plaintive song."[15]

[14] HORACE, *Odes*, I. 7, 15–19. [15] VIRGIL, *Georgics*, IV. 511–15.

Here we not only find the most scrupulous propriety, and the happiest choice, in comparing the Thracian bard to Philomel the poet of the grove; but also the most beautiful description, containing a fine touch of the pathos, in which last particular indeed Virgil, in our opinion, excels all other poets, whether ancient or modern.

One would imagine that nature had exhausted itself, in order to embellish the poems of Homer, Virgil, and Milton, with similes and metaphors. The first of these very often uses the comparison of the wind, the whirlwind, the hail, the torrent, to express the rapidity of his combatants; but when he comes to describe the velocity of the immortal horses that drew the chariot of Juno, he raises his ideas to the subject, and, as Longinus observes, measures every leap by the whole breadth of the horizon.

Ὅσσον δ' ἠεροειδὲς ἀνὴρ ἴδεν ὀφθαλμοῖσιν,
Ἥμενος ἐν σκοπιῇ λεύσσων ἐπὶ οἴνοπα πόντον,
Τόσσον ἐπιθρώσκουσι θεῶν ὑψηχέες ἵπποι.

"For as a watchman from some rock on high
O'er the wide main extends his boundless eye;
Through such a space of air with thundering sound
At every leap th' immortal coursers bound." [16]

The celerity of this goddess seems to be a favourite idea with the poet; for in another place, he compares it to the thought of a traveller revolving in his mind the different places he had seen, and passing through them in imagination more swift than the lightning flies from east to west.

Homer's best similes have been copied by Virgil, and almost every succeeding poet, however they may have varied in the manner of expression.

In the third book of the Iliad, Menelaus seeing Paris, is compared to a hungry lion espying a hind or goat.

Ὥστε λέων ἐχάρη, μεγάλῳ ἐπὶ σώματι κύρσας,
Ἠὲ λαφον κεραὸν, ἢ ἄγριον αἶγα, etc.

[16] HOMER, *Iliad*, V. 770–72.

"So joys the lion, if a branching deer
Or mountain goat his bulky prize appear;
In vain the youths oppose, the mastiffs bay,
The lordly savage rends the panting prey,
Thus fond of vengeance, with a furious bound
In clanging arms he leaps upon the ground." [17]

The Mantuan bard, in the tenth book of the Eneid, applies the same simile to Mezentius, when he beholds Acron in the battle.

"*Impastus stabulâ altâ leo ceu sæpe peragrans;*
(Suadet enim vesana fames), si fortè fugacem
Conspexit capream, aut surgentem in cornua cervum
Gaudet, hians immanè, comasque arrexit, et hæret
Visceribus super accumbens; lavit improba teter
Ora cruor."

"Then as a hungry lion, who beholds
A gamesome goat who frisks about the folds,
Or beamy stag that grazes on the plain;
He runs, he roars, he shakes his rising mane:
He grins, and opens wide his greedy jaws,
The prey lies panting underneath his paws;
He fills his famish'd maw, his mouth runs o'er
With unchew'd morsels, while he churns the gore." [18] — DRYDEN.

The reader will perceive that Virgil has improved the simile in one particular, and in another fallen short of his original. The description of the lion shaking his mane, opening his hideous jaws distained with the blood of his prey, is great and picturesque; but on the other hand, he has omitted the circumstance of devouring it without being intimidated, or restrained by the dogs and the youths that surround him; a circumstance that adds greatly to our ideas of his strength, intrepidity, and importance.

[17] HOMER, *Iliad*, III. 23 ff. [18] VIRGIL, *Æneid*, X. 723–28.

XXI.

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

(1709–1784.)

PREFACE TO SHAKESPEARE.

[Written in 1765.]

SHAKESPEARE with his excellencies has likewise faults, and faults sufficient to obscure and overwhelm any other merit. I shall show them in the proportion in which they appear to me, without envious malignity or superstitious veneration. No question can be more innocently discussed than a dead poet's pretensions to renown; and little regard is due to that bigotry which sets candour higher than truth.

His first defect is that to which may be imputed most of the evil in books or in men. He sacrifices virtue to convenience, and is so much more careful to please than to instruct, that he seems to write without any moral purpose. From his writings, indeed, a system of social duty may be selected, for he that thinks reasonably must think morally; but his precepts and axioms drop casually from him; he makes no just distribution of good or evil, nor is always careful to show in the virtuous a disapprobation of the wicked; he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and at the close dismisses them without further care, and leaves their examples to operate by chance. This fault the barbarity of his age cannot estimate; for it is always a writer's duty to make the world better, and justice is a virtue independent on time or place.

The plots are often so loosely formed that a very slight consideration may improve them, and so carelessly pursued that he

seems not always fully to comprehend his own design. He omits opportunities of instructing or delighting, which the train of his story seems to force upon him, and apparently rejects those exhibitions which would be more affecting, for the sake of those which are more easy.

It may be observed that in many of his plays the latter part is evidently neglected. When he found himself near the end of his work, and in view of his reward, he shortened the labour to snatch the profit. He therefore remits his efforts where he should most vigorously exert them, and his catastrophe is improbably produced or imperfectly represented.

He had no regard to distinction of time or place, but gives to one age or nation, without scruple, the customs, institutions, and opinions of another, at the expense not only of likelihood, but of possibility. These faults Pope has endeavoured, with more zeal than judgment, to transfer to his imagined interpolators. We need not wonder to find Hector quoting Aristotle, when we see the loves of Theseus and Hippolyta combined with the gothick mythology of fairies. Shakespeare, indeed, was not the only violator of chronology, for in the same age Sidney, who wanted not the advantages of learning, has, in his *Arcadia*, confounded the pastoral with the feudal times, the days of innocence, quiet, and security, with those of turbulence, violence, and adventure.

In his comick scenes he is seldom very successful when he engages his characters in reciprocations of smartness and contests of sarcasm; their jests are commonly gross, and their pleasantry licentious; neither his gentlemen nor his ladies have much delicacy, nor are sufficiently distinguished from his clowns by any appearance of refined manners. Whether he represented the real conversation of his time is not easy to determine: the reign of Elizabeth is commonly supposed to have been a time of stateliness, formality, and reserve; yet perhaps the relaxations of that severity were not very elegant. There must, however, have been always some modes of gayety preferable to others, and a writer ought to choose the best.

In tragedy his performance seems constantly to be worse, as his labour is more. The effusions of passion, which exigence forces out, are for the most part striking and energetick; but whenever he solicits his invention, or strains his faculties, the offspring of his throes is tumour, meanness, tediousness, and obscurity.

In narration he affects a disproportionate pomp of diction, and a wearisome train of circumlocution, and tells the incident imperfectly in many words which might have been more plainly delivered in few. Narration in dramatick poetry is naturally tedious, as it is unanimated and inactive, and obstructs the progress of the action; it should therefore always be rapid, and enlivened by frequent interruption. Shakespeare found it an incumbrance, and instead of lightening it by brevity, endeavoured to recommend it by dignity and splendour.

His declamations or set speeches are commonly cold and weak, for his power was the power of nature; when he endeavoured, like other tragick writers, to catch opportunities of amplification, and instead of inquiring what the occasion demanded, to show how much his stores of knowledge could supply, he seldom escapes without the pity or resentment of his reader.

It is incident to him to be now and then entangled with an unwieldy sentiment, which he cannot well express, and will not reject; he struggles with it a while, and, if it continues stubborn, comprises it in words such as occur, and leaves it to be disentangled and solved by those who have more leisure to bestow upon it.

Not that always where the language is intricate the thought is subtle, or the image always great where the line is bulky; the equality of words to things is very often neglected, and trivial sentiments and vulgar ideas disappoint the attention, to which they are recommended by sonorous epithets and swelling figures.

But the admirers of this great poet have most reason to complain when he approaches nearest to his highest excellence, and seems fully resolved to sink them in dejection, and mollify them with tender emotions by the fall of greatness, the danger of inno-

cence, or the crosses of love. What he does best, he soon ceases to do. He is not soft and pathetic without some idle conceit, or contemptible equivocation. He no sooner begins to move, than he counteracts himself; and terrour and pity, as they are rising in the mind, are checked and blasted by sudden frigidity. A quibble is to Shakespeare, what luminous vapours are to the traveller: he follows it at all adventures; it is sure to lead him out of his way, and sure to engulf him in the mire. It has some malignant power over his mind, and its fascinations are irresistible. Whatever be the dignity or profundity of his disposition, whether he be enlarging knowledge or exalting affection, whether he be amusing attention with incidents, or enchaining it in suspense, let but a quibble spring up before him, and he leaves his work unfinished. A quibble is the golden apple for which he will always turn aside from his career, or stoop from his elevation. A quibble, poor and barren as it is, gave him such delight, that he was content to purchase it, by the sacrifice of reason, propriety, and truth. A quibble was to him the fatal Cleopatra for which he lost the world, and was content to lose it.

It will be thought strange that, in enumerating the defects of this writer, I have not yet mentioned his neglect of the unities; his violation of those laws which have been instituted and established by the joint authority of poets and criticks.

For his other deviations from the art of writing, I resign him to critical justice, without making any other demand in his favour, than that which must be indulged to all human excellence: that his virtues be rated with his failings: but from the censure which this irregularity may bring upon him, I shall, with due reverence to that learning which I must oppose, adventure to try how I can defend him.

His histories, being neither tragedies nor comedies, are not subject to any of their laws; nothing more is necessary to all the praise which they expect, than that the changes of action be so prepared as to be understood; that the incidents be various and affecting, and the characters consistent, natural, and distinct. No other unity is intended, and therefore none is to be sought.

In his other works he has well enough preserved the unity of action. He has not, indeed, an intrigue regularly perplexed and regularly unravelled: he does not endeavour to hide his design only to discover it, for this is seldom the order of real events, and Shakespeare is the poet of nature: but his plan has commonly, what Aristotle requires, a beginning, a middle, and an end; one event is concatenated with another, and the conclusion follows by easy consequence. There are perhaps some incidents that might be spared, as in other poets there is much talk that only fills up time upon the stage; but the general system makes gradual advances, and the end of the play is the end of expectation.

To the unities of time and place he has shown no regard; and perhaps a nearer view of the principles on which they stand will diminish their value, and withdraw from them the veneration which, from the time of Corneille, they have very generally received, by discovering that they have given more trouble to the poet than pleasure to the auditor.

The necessity of observing the unities of time and place arises from the supposed necessity of making the drama credible. The criticks hold it impossible that an action of months or years can be possibly believed to pass in three hours; or that the spectator can suppose himself to sit in the theatre, while ambassadors go and return between distant kings, while armies are levied and towns besieged, while an exile wanders, and returns, or till he whom they saw courting his mistress shall lament the untimely fall of his son. The mind revolts from evident falsehood, and fiction loses its force when it departs from the resemblance of reality.

From the narrow limitation of time necessarily arises the contraction of place. The spectator, who knows that he saw the first act at Alexandria, cannot suppose that he sees the next at Rome, at a distance to which not the dragons of Medea could, in so short a time, have transported him; he knows with certainty that he has not changed his place, and he knows that place cannot change itself; that what was a house cannot become a plain; that what was Thebes can never be Persepolis.

Such is the triumphant language with which a critick exults over the misery of an irregular poet, and exults commonly without resistance or reply. It is time, therefore, to tell him by the authority of Shakespeare, that he assumes, as an unquestionable principle, a position, which, while his breath is forming it into words, his understanding pronounces to be false. It is false, that any representation is mistaken for reality; that any dramatick fable in its materiality was ever credible, or, for a single moment, was ever credited.

The objection arising from the impossibility of passing the first hour at Alexandria, and the next at Rome, supposes that when the play opens, the spectator really imagines himself at Alexandria, and believes that his walk to the theatre has been a voyage to Egypt, and that he lives in the days of Antony and Cleopatra. Surely he that imagines this may imagine more. He that can take the stage at one time for the palace of the Ptolemies, may take it in half an hour for the promontory of Actium. Delusion, if delusion be admitted, has no certain limitation; if the spectator can be once persuaded, that his old acquaintance are Alexander and Cæsar, that a room illuminated with candles is the plain of Pharsalia, or the bank of Granicus, he is in a state of elevation above the reach of reason, or of truth, and from the heights of empyrean poetry, may despise the circumscriptions of terrestrial nature.

There is no reason why a mind thus wandering in ecstacy should count the clock, or why an hour should not be a century in that calenture of the brain that can make the stage a field.

The truth is that the spectators are always in their senses, and know, from the first act to the last, that the stage is only a stage, and that the players are only players. They came to hear a certain number of lines recited with just gesture and elegant modulation. The lines relate to some action, and an action must be in some place; but the different actions that complete a story may be in places very remote from each other; and where is the absurdity of allowing that space to represent first Athens, and then Sicily,

which was always known to be neither Sicily nor Athens, but a modern theatre?

By supposition, as place is introduced, time may be extended; the time required by the fable elapses for the most part between the acts; for, of so much of the action as is represented, the real and poetical duration is the same. If, in the first act, preparations for war against Mithridates are represented to be made in Rome, the event of the war may, without absurdity, be represented, in the catastrophe, as happening in Pontus; we know that there is neither war, nor preparation for war; we know that we are neither in Rome nor Pontus; that neither Mithridates nor Lucullus are before us. The drama exhibits successive imitations of successive actions; and why may not the second imitation represent an action that happened years after the first, if it be so connected with it that nothing but time can be supposed to intervene? Time is, of all modes of existence, most obsequious to the imagination; a lapse of years is as easily conceived as a passage of hours. In contemplation we easily contract the time of real actions, and therefore willingly permit it to be contracted when we only see their imitation.

It will be asked, how the drama moves, if it is not credited. It is credited with all the credit due to a drama. It is credited, whenever it moves, as a just picture of a real original; as representing to the auditor what he would himself feel, if he were to do or suffer what is there feigned to be suffered or to be done. The reflection that strikes the heart is not that the evils before us are real evils, but that they are evils to which we ourselves may be exposed. If there be any fallacy, it is not that we fancy the players, but that we fancy ourselves unhappy for a moment; but we rather lament the possibility than suppose the presence of misery, as a mother weeps over her babe, when she remembers that death may take it from her. The delight of tragedy proceeds from our consciousness of fiction; if we thought murders and treasons real, they would please no more.

Imitations produce pain or pleasure, not because they are mis-

taken for realities, but because they bring realities to mind. When the imagination is recreated by a painted landscape, the trees are not supposed capable to give us shade, or the fountains coolness; but we consider how we should be pleased with such fountains playing beside us, and such woods waving over us. We are agitated in reading the history of Henry the Fifth, yet no man takes his book for the field of Agincourt. A dramatick exhibition is a book recited with concomitants that increase or diminish its effect. Familiar comedy is often more powerful on the theatre than in the page; imperial tragedy is always less. The humour of Petruchio may be heightened by grimace; but what voice or what gesture can hope to add dignity or force to the soliloquy of Cato?

A play read affects the mind like a play acted. It is therefore evident that the action is not supposed to be real; and it follows that between the acts a longer or shorter time may be allowed to pass, and that no more account of space or duration is to be taken by the auditor of a drama, than by the reader of a narrative, before whom may pass in an hour the life of a hero, or the revolutions of an empire.

Whether Shakespeare knew the unities, and rejected them by design, or deviated from them by happy ignorance, it is, I think, impossible to decide and useless to inquire. We may reasonably suppose that, when he rose to notice, he did not want the counsels and admonitions of scholars and criticks, and that he at last deliberately persisted in a practice, which he might have begun by chance. As nothing is essential to the fable but unity of action, and as the unities of time and place arise evidently from false assumptions, and, by circumscribing the extent of the drama, lessen its variety, I cannot think it much to be lamented that they were not known by him, or not observed: nor, if such another poet could arise, should I very vehemently reproach him that his first act passed at Venice, and his next in Cyprus. Such violations of rules merely positive become the comprehensive genius of Shakespeare, and such censures are suitable to the minute and slender criticism of Voltaire.

" Non usque adeo permiscuit imis
Longus summa dies, ut non, si voce Metelli
Serventur leges, malint a Cæsare tolli." [1]

Yet when I speak thus slightly of dramatick rules, I cannot but recollect how much wit and learning may be produced against me; before such authorities I am afraid to stand, not that I think the present question one of those that are to be decided by mere authority, but because it is to be suspected, that these precepts have not been so easily received, but for better reasons than I have yet been able to find.

The result of my inquiries, in which it would be ludicrous to boast of impartiality, is, that the unities of time and place are not essential to a just drama, that though they may sometimes conduce to pleasure, they are always to be sacrificed to the noble beauties of variety and instruction; and that a play written with nice observation of critical rules, is to be contemplated as an elaborate curiosity, as the product of superfluous and ostentatious art, by which is shown, rather what is possible, than what is necessary.

He that, without diminution of any other excellence, shall preserve all the unities unbroken, deserves the like applause with the architect, who shall display all the orders of architecture in a citadel, without any deduction from its strength: but the principal beauty of a citadel is to exclude the enemy; and the greatest graces of a play are to copy nature, and instruct life. Perhaps, what I have here not dogmatically but deliberately written, may recall the principles of the drama to a new examination. I am almost frightened at my own temerity; and when I estimate the fame and the strength of those that maintain the contrary opinion, am ready to sink down in reverential silence; as Æneas withdrew from the defence of Troy, when he saw Neptune shaking the wall, and Juno heading the besiegers.

[1] *Time has not so far confused the highest with the lowest, that, if laws may be observed by the command of Metellus, they may not prefer to be annulled by Cæsar.*

Those whom my arguments cannot persuade to give their approbation to the judgment of Shakespeare, will easily, if they consider the condition of his life, make some allowance for his ignorance.

Every man's performances, to be rightly estimated, must be compared with the state of the age in which he lived, and with his own particular opportunities; and though to the reader a book be not worse or better for the circumstances of the author, yet as there is always a silent reference of human works to human abilities, and as the inquiry, how far man may extend his designs, or how high he may rate his native force, is of far greater dignity than in what rank we shall place any particular performance, curiosity is always busy to discover the instruments, as well as to survey the workmanship, to know how much is to be ascribed to original powers, and how much to casual and adventitious help. The palaces of Peru or Mexico were certainly mean and incommodious habitations, if compared to the houses of European monarchs; yet who could forbear to view them with astonishment, who remembered that they were built without the use of iron?

The English nation, in the time of Shakespeare, was yet struggling to emerge from barbarity. The philology of Italy had been transplanted hither in the reign of Henry the Eighth; and the learned languages had been successfully cultivated by Lilly, Linacre, and More; by Pole, Cheke, and Gardiner; and afterwards by Smith, Clerk, Haddon, and Ascham. Greek was now taught to boys in the principal schools; and those who united elegance with learning, read, with great diligence, the Italian and Spanish poets. But literature was yet confined to professed scholars, or to men and women of high rank. The publick was gross and dark; and to be able to read and write was an accomplishment still valued for its rarity.

Nations, like individuals, have their infancy. A people newly awakened to literary curiosity, being yet unacquainted with the true state of things, knows not how to judge of that which is proposed as its resemblance. Whatever is remote from common

appearances is always welcome to vulgar, as to childish credulity; and of a country unenlightened by learning, the whole people is the vulgar. The study of those who then aspired to plebeian learning was laid out upon adventures, giants, dragons, and enchantments. *The Death of Arthur* was the favourite volume.

The mind, which has feasted on the luxurious wonders of fiction, has no taste of the insipidity of truth. A play which imitated only the common occurrences of the world, would, upon the admirers of *Palmerin* and *Guy of Warwick*, have made little impression; he that wrote for such an audience was under the necessity of looking round for strange events and fabulous transactions; and that incredibility, by which maturer knowledge is offended, was the chief recommendation of writings to unskilful curiosity.

Our author's plots are generally borrowed from novels; and it is reasonable to suppose that he chose the most popular, such as were read by many, and related by more; for his audience could not have followed him through the intricacies of the drama, had they not held the thread of the story in their hands.

The stories, which we now find only in remoter authors, were in his time accessible and familiar. The fable of *As you like it*, which is supposed to be copied from Chaucer's *Gamelyn*,[2] was a little pamphlet of those times; and old Mr. Cibber remembered the tale of Hamlet in plain English prose, which the criticks have now to seek in Saxo Grammaticus. His English histories he took from English chronicles and English ballads; and as the ancient writers were made known to his countrymen by version, they supplied him with new objects; he dilated some of Plutarch's Lives into plays, when they had been translated by North.

His plots, whether historical or fabulous, are always crowded with incidents, by which the attention of a rude people was more easily caught than by sentiment or argumentation; and such is

[2] It is copied from Lodge's *Rosalynd*, first published in 1590, second edition 1592, from which *Rosalynd* is reprinted in Collier's Shakespeare's Library, Vol. II. Moreover, *The Tale of Gamelyn* is not Chaucer's. See Skeat's edition of *The Tale of Gamelyn*, and Furness's *As You Like It*, Appendix.

the power of the marvellous, even over those who despise it, that every man finds his mind more strongly seized by the tragedies of Shakespeare than of any other writer; others please us by particular speeches; but he always makes us anxious for the event, and has perhaps excelled all but Homer in securing the first purpose of a writer, by exciting restless and unquenchable curiosity, and compelling him that reads his work to read it through.

The shows and bustle with which his plays abound have the same original. As knowledge advances, pleasure passes from the eye to the ear, but returns, as it declines, from the ear to the eye. Those to whom our author's labours were exhibited had more skill in pomps or processions than in poetical language, and perhaps wanted some visible and discriminating events, as comments on the dialogue. He knew how he should most please; and whether his practice is more agreeable to nature, or whether his example has prejudiced the nation, we still find that on our stage something must be done as well as said, and inactive declamation is very coldly heard, however musical or elegant, passionate or sublime.

Voltaire expresses his wonder that our author's extravagances are endured by a nation which has seen the tragedy of *Cato*. Let him be answered that Addison speaks the language of poets; and Shakespeare, of men. We find in *Cato* innumerable beauties which enamour us of its author, but we see nothing that acquaints us with human sentiments or human actions; we place it with the fairest and the noblest progeny which judgment propagates by conjunction with learning; but Othello is the vigorous and vivacious offspring of observation impregnated by genius. *Cato* affords a splendid exhibition of artificial and fictitious manners, and delivers just and noble sentiments, in diction easy, elevated, and harmonious, but its hopes and fears communicate no vibration to the heart; the composition refers us only to the writer; we pronounce the name of *Cato*, but we think on Addison.

The work of a correct and regular writer is a garden accurately formed and diligently planted, varied with shades, and scented

with flowers ; the composition of Shakespeare is a forest, in which oaks extend their branches, and pines tower in the air, interspersed sometimes with weeds and brambles, and sometimes giving shelter to myrtles and to roses ; filling the eye with awful pomp, and gratifying the mind with endless diversity. Other poets display cabinets of precious rarities, minutely finished, wrought into shape, and polished into brightness. Shakespeare opens a mine which contains gold and diamonds in unexhaustible plenty, though clouded by incrustations, debased by impurities, and mingled with a mass of meaner materials.

It has been much disputed, whether Shakespeare owed his excellence to his own native force, or whether he had the common helps of scholastick education, the precepts of critical science, and the examples of ancient authors.

There has always prevailed a tradition, that Shakespeare wanted learning, that he had no regular education, nor much skill in the dead languages. Jonson, his friend, affirms, that *he had small Latin, and less Greek ;* who, besides that he had no imaginable temptation to falsehood, wrote at a time when the character and acquisitions of Shakespeare were known to multitudes. His evidence ought therefore to decide the controversy, unless some testimony of equal force could be opposed.

Some have imagined that they have discovered deep learning in many imitations of old writers ; but the examples which I have known urged were drawn from books translated in his time ; or were such easy coincidences of thought as will happen to all who consider the same subjects ; or such remarks on life or axioms of morality as float in conversation, and are transmitted through the world in proverbial sentences.

I have found it remarked, that, in this important sentence, "Go before, I'll follow," we read a translation of *I præ, sequar.*[3] I have been told, that when Caliban, after a pleasing dream, says, "I cry'd to sleep again," the author imitates Anacreon, who had, like every other man, the same wish on the same occasion.

[3] TERENCE, *Andria*, I., 1, 144.

There are a few passages which may pass for imitations, but so few that the exception only confirms the rule; he obtained them from accidental quotations, or by oral communication, and as he used what he had, would have used more if he had obtained it.

The *Comedy of Errors* is confessedly taken from the *Menæchmi* of Plautus, from the only play of Plautus which was then in English. What can be more probable than that he who copied that would have copied more; but that those which were not translated were inaccessible?

Whether he knew the modern languages is uncertain. That his plays have some French scenes proves but little; he might easily procure them to be written, and probably, even though he had known the language in the common degree, he could not have written it without assistance. In the story of *Romeo and Juliet* he is observed to have followed the English translation where it deviates from the Italian; but this on the other part proves nothing against his knowledge of the original. He was to copy, not what he knew himself, but what was known to his audience.

It is most likely that he had learned Latin sufficiently to make him acquainted with construction, but that he never advanced to an easy perusal of the Roman authors. Concerning his skill in modern languages, I can find no sufficient ground of determination; but as no imitations of French or Italian authors have been discovered, though the Italian poetry was then high in esteem, I am inclined to believe that he read little more than English, and chose for his fables only such tales as he found translated.

That much knowledge is scattered over his works is very justly observed by Pope; but it is often such knowledge as books did not supply. He that will understand Shakespeare, must not be content to study him in the closet; he must look for his meaning sometimes among the sports of the field, and sometimes among the manufactures of the shop.

There is, however, proof enough that he was a very diligent reader, nor was our language then so indigent of books, but that

he might very liberally indulge his curiosity without excursion into foreign literature. Many of the Roman authors were translated, and some of the Greek; the Reformation had filled the kingdom with theological learning; most of the topicks of human disquisition had found English writers; and poetry had been cultivated, not only with diligence, but success. This was a stock of knowledge sufficient for a mind so capable of appropriating and improving it.

But the greater part of his excellence was the product of his own genius. He found the English stage in a state of the utmost rudeness; no essays either in tragedy or comedy had appeared from which it could be discovered to what degree of delight either one or other might be carried. Neither character nor dialogue were yet understood. Shakespeare may be truly said to have introduced them both amongst us, and in some of his happier scenes to have carried them both to the utmost height.

By what gradations of improvement he proceeded, is not easily known; for the chronology of his works is yet unsettled. Rowe is of opinion that "perhaps we are not to look for his beginning, like those of other writers, in his least perfect works; art had so little, and nature so large a share in what he did that for aught I know," says he, "the performances of his youth, as they were the most vigorous, were the best."

But the power of nature is only the power of using to any certain purpose the materials which diligence procures, or opportunity supplies. Nature gives no man knowledge, and, when images are collected by study and experience, can only assist in combining or applying them. Shakespeare, however favoured by nature, could impart only what he had learned; and as he must increase his ideas, like other mortals, by gradual acquisition, he, like them, grew wiser as he grew older, could display life better, as he knew it more, and instruct with more efficacy, as he was himself more amply instructed.

There is a vigilance of observation and accuracy of distinction which books and precepts cannot confer; from this almost all

original and native excellence proceeds. Shakespeare must have looked upon mankind with perspicacity, in the highest degree curious and attentive. Other writers borrow their characters from preceding writers, and diversify them only by the accidental appendages of present manners; the dress is a little varied, but the body is the same. Our author had both matter and form to provide; for, except the characters of Chaucer, to whom I think he is not much indebted, there were no writers in English, and perhaps not many in other modern languages, which showed life in its native colours.

The contest about the original benevolence or malignity of man had not yet commenced. Speculation had not yet attempted to analyse the mind, to trace the passions to their sources, to unfold the seminal principles of vice and virtue, or sound the depths of the heart for the motives of action. All those enquiries, which from that time that human nature became the fashionable study, have been made sometimes with nice discernment, but often with idle subtility, were yet unattempted. The tales with which the infancy of learning was satisfied, exhibited only the superficial appearances of action, related the events, but omitted the causes, and were formed for such as delighted in wonders rather than in truth. Mankind was not then to be studied in the closet; he that would know the world, was under the necessity of gleaning his own remarks by mingling as he could in its business and amusements.

Boyle congratulated himself upon his high birth, because it favoured his curiosity by facilitating his access. Shakespeare had no such advantage; he came to London a needy adventurer, and lived for a time by very mean employments. Many works of genius and learning have been performed in states of life that appear very little favourable to thought or to enquiry; so many, that he who considers them is inclined to think that he sees enterprize and perseverance predominating over all external agency, and bidding help and hindrance vanish before them. The genius of Shakespeare was not to be depressed by the weight of poverty,

nor limited by the narrow conversation to which men in want are inevitably condemned; the incumbrances of his fortune were shaken from his mind, "as dew drops from a lion's mane."

Though he had so many difficulties to encounter, and so little assistance to surmount them, he has been able to obtain an exact knowledge of many modes of life, and many casts of native dispositions; to vary them with great multiplicity; to mark them by nice distinctions; and to show them in full view by proper combinations. In this part of his performances he had none to imitate, but has been himself imitated by all succeeding writers; and it may be doubted whether from all his successours more maxims of theoretical knowledge, or more rules of practical prudence, can be collected, than he alone has given to his country.

Nor was his attention confined to the actions of men; he was an exact surveyor of the inanimate world; his descriptions have always some peculiarities, gathered by contemplating things as they really exist. It may be observed that the oldest poets of many nations preserve their reputation, and that the following generations of wit, after a short celebrity, sink into oblivion. The first, whoever they be, must take their sentiments and descriptions immediately from knowledge; the resemblance is therefore just, their descriptions are verified by every eye, and their sentiments acknowledged by every breast. Those whom their fame invites to the same studies copy partly them, and partly nature, till the books of one age gain such authority as to stand in the place of nature to another, and imitation, always deviating a little, becomes at last capricious and casual. Shakespeare, whether life or nature be his subject, shows plainly that he has seen with his own eyes; he gives the image which he receives, not weakened or distorted by the intervention of any other mind; the ignorant feel his representations to be just, and the learned see that they are complete.

Perhaps it would not be easy to find any author, except Homer, who invented so much as Shakespeare, who so much advanced the studies which he cultivated, or effused so much novelty upon his age or country. The form, the characters, the language, and

the shows of the English drama are his. "He seems," says Dennis, "to have been the very original of our English tragical harmony, that is, the harmony of blank verse, diversified often by dissyllable and trissyllable terminations. For the diversity distinguishes it from heroick harmony, and by bringing it nearer to common use makes it more proper to gain attention, and more fit for action and dialogue. Such verse we make when we are writing prose; we make such verse in common conversation."

I know not whether this praise is rigorously just. The dissyllable termination, which the critick rightly appropriates to the drama, is to be found, though, I think, not in *Gorboduc*,[4] which is confessedly before our author; yet in *Hieronymo*,[5] of which the date is not certain, but which there is reason to believe at least as old as his earliest plays. This however is certain, that he is the first who taught either tragedy or comedy to please, there being no theatrical piece of any older writer, of which the name is known except to antiquaries and collectors of books, which are sought because they are scarce, and would not have been scarce had they been much esteemed.[6]

To him we must ascribe the praise, unless Spenser may divide it with him, of having first discovered to how much smoothness and harmony the English language could be softened. He has speeches, perhaps sometimes scenes, which have all the delicacy of Rowe, without his effeminacy. He endeavours indeed commonly to strike by the force and vigour of his dialogue, but he never executes his purpose better than when he tries to soothe by softness.

Yet it must be at last confessed that, as we owe everything to him, he owes something to us; that, if much of his praise is paid by perception and judgment, much is likewise given by custom

[4] Our first tragedy, written in blank verse by Sackville and Norton, and acted before the Queen, Jan. 18, 1561.

[5] Ascribed by some to Thomas Kyd, who wrote its continuation, "The Spanish Tragedy," acted about 1588.

[6] Johnson singularly omits the tragedies of Marlowe.

and veneration. We fix our eyes upon his graces, and turn them from his deformities, and endure in him what we should in another loathe or despise. If we endured without praising, respect for the father of our drama might excuse us; but I have seen, in the book of some modern critick, a collection of anomalies, which show that he has corrupted language by every mode of depravation, but which his admirer has accumulated as a monument of honour.

He has scenes of undoubted and perpetual excellence; but perhaps not one play, which, if it were now exhibited as the work of a contemporary writer, would be heard to the conclusion. I am, indeed, far from thinking that his works were wrought to his own ideas of perfection; when they were such as would satisfy the audience, they satisfied the writer. It is seldom that authors, though more studious of fame than Shakespeare, rise much above the standard of their own age; to add a little to what is best will always be sufficient for present praise, and those who find themselves exalted into fame, are willing to credit their encomiasts, and to spare the labour of contending with themselves.

It does not appear that Shakespeare thought his works worthy of posterity, that he levied any ideal tribute upon future times, or had any further prospect than of present popularity and present profit. When his plays had been acted, his hope was at an end; he solicited no addition of honour from the reader. He therefore made no scruple to repeat the same jests in many dialogues, or to entangle different plots by the same knot of perplexity: which may be at least forgiven him by those who recollect, that of Congreve's four comedies, two are concluded by a marriage in a mask, by a deception, which perhaps never happened, and which, whether likely or not, he did not invent.

So careless was this great poet of future fame that, though he retired to ease and plenty, while he was yet little "declined into the vale of years," before he could be disgusted with fatigue, or disabled by infirmity, he made no collection of his works, nor desired to rescue those that had been already published from the deprava-

tions that obscured them, or secure to the rest a better destiny, by giving them to the world in their genuine state.

Of the plays which bear the name of Shakespeare in the late editions, the greater part were not published till about seven years after his death; and the few which appeared in his life are apparently thrust into the world without the care of the author, and therefore probably without his knowledge.

Of all the publishers, clandestine or professed, the negligence or unskilfulness has by the late revisers been sufficiently shown. The faults of all are, indeed, numerous and gross, and have not only corrupted many passages perhaps beyond recovery, but have brought others into suspicion, which are only obscured by obsolete phraseology, or by the writer's unskilfulness or affectation. To alter is more easy than to explain, and temerity is a more common quality than diligence. Those who saw that they must employ conjecture to a certain degree, were willing to indulge it a little further. Had the author published his own works, we should have sat quickly down to disentangle his intricacies, and clear his obscurities; but now we tear what we cannot loose, and eject what we happen not to understand.[7]

[7] I regret that lack of space forbids a longer selection from Johnson's "Preface to Shakespeare," which still deserves to be read by every student of Shakespeare.

XXII.

EDMUND BURKE.

(1728–1797.)

SPEECH ON CONCILIATION WITH AMERICA.

[Delivered March 22, 1775.]

THESE, Sir, are my reasons for not entertaining that high opinion of untried force, by which many gentlemen, for whose sentiments in other particulars I have great respect, seem to be so greatly captivated. But there is still behind a third consideration concerning this object, which serves to determine my opinion on the sort of policy which ought to be pursued in the management of America, even more than its population and its commerce, I mean its *temper and character.*

In this character of the Americans, a love of freedom is the predominating feature which marks and distinguishes the whole; and as an ardent is always a jealous affection, your Colonies become suspicious, restive, and untractable, whenever they see the least attempt to wrest from them by force or shuffle from them by chicane, what they think the only advantage worth living for. This fierce spirit of liberty is stronger in the English Colonies probably than in any other people of the earth; and this from a great variety of powerful causes; which to understand the true temper of their minds, and the direction which this spirit takes, it will not be amiss to lay open somewhat more largely.

First, the people of the Colonies are descendants of Englishmen. England, Sir, is a nation which still I hope respects, and formerly adored, her freedom. The Colonists emigrated from you when

this part of your character was most predominant; and they took this bias and direction the moment they parted from your hands. They are therefore not only devoted to liberty, but to liberty according to English ideas, and on English principles. Abstract liberty, like other mere abstractions, is not to be found. Liberty inheres in some sensible object; and every nation has formed to itself some favourite point, which by way of eminence becomes the criterion of their happiness. It happened, you know, Sir, that the great contests for freedom in this country were from the earliest times chiefly upon the question of taxing. Most of the contests in the ancient commonwealths turned primarily on the right of election of magistrates; or on the balance among the several orders of the State. The question of money was not with them so immediate. But in England it was otherwise. On this point of taxes the ablest pens and most eloquent tongues have been exercised; the greatest spirits have acted and suffered. In order to give the fullest satisfaction concerning the importance of this point, it was not only necessary for those who in argument defended the excellence of the English Constitution to insist on this privilege of granting money as a dry point of fact, and to prove that the right had been acknowledged in ancient parchments and blind usage to reside in a certain body called a House of Commons. They went much farther; they attempted to prove, and they succeeded, that in theory it ought to be so, from the particular nature of a House of Commons as an immediate representative of the people, whether the old records had delivered this oracle or not. They took infinite pains to inculcate, as a fundamental principle, that in all monarchies the people must in effect themselves, mediately or immediately, possess the power of granting their own money, or no shadow of liberty could subsist. The Colonies draw from you, as with their life-blood, these ideas and principles. Their love of liberty, as with you, fixed and attached on this specific point of taxing. Liberty might be safe, or might be endangered, in twenty other particulars, without their being much pleased or alarmed. Here they felt its pulse; and as

they found that beat, they thought themselves sick or sound. I do not say whether they were right or wrong in applying your general arguments to their own cause. It is not easy indeed to make a monopoly of theorems and corollaries. The fact is, that they did thus apply those general arguments; and your mode of governing them, whether through lenity or indolence, through wisdom or mistake, confirmed them in the imagination, that they, as well as you, had an interest in these common principles.

They were further confirmed in this pleasing error by the form of their provincial legislative assemblies. Their governments are popular in a high degree; some are merely[1] popular; in all, the popular representative is the most weighty; and this share of the people in their ordinary government never fails to inspire them with lofty sentiments, and with a strong aversion from[2] whatever tends to deprive them of their chief importance.

If anything were wanting to this necessary operation of the form of government, religion would have given it a complete effect. Religion, always a principle of energy, in this new people is no way worn out or impaired; and their mode of professing it is also one main cause of this free spirit. The people are Protestants; and of that kind which is the most adverse to all implicit submission of mind and opinion. This is a persuasion not only favourable to liberty, but built upon it. I do not think, Sir, that the reason of this averseness in the dissenting churches, from all that looks like absolute government, is so much to be sought in their religious tenets as in their history. Every one knows that the Roman Catholic religion is at least coeval with most of the governments where it prevails; that it has generally gone hand in hand with them, and received great favour and every kind of support from authority. The Church of England too was formed from her cradle under the nursing care of regular government. But the dissenting interests have sprung up in direct opposition to all the ordinary powers of the world; and could justify that opposition only on a strong claim to natural liberty. Their very

[1] entirely. [2] correct, but now regarded as archaic.

existence depended on the powerful and unremitted assertion of that claim. All Protestantism, even the most cold and passive, is a sort of dissent. But the religion most prevalent in our Northern Colonies is a refinement on the principle of resistance; it is the dissidence of dissent, and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion. This religion, under a variety of denominations agreeing in nothing but in the communion of the spirit of liberty, is predominant in most of the Northern provinces, where the Church of England, notwithstanding its legal rights, is in reality no more than a sort of private sect, not composing most probably the tenth of the people. The Colonists left England when this spirit was high, and in the emigrants was the highest of all, and even that stream of foreigners, which has been constantly flowing into these Colonies, has, for the greatest part, been composed of dissenters from the establishments of their several countries, and have brought with them a temper and character far from alien to that of the people with whom they mixed.

Sir, I can perceive by their manner, that some gentlemen object to the latitude of this description, because in the Southern Colonies the Church of England forms a large body, and has a regular establishment. It is certainly true. There is, however, a circumstance attending these Colonies, which, in my opinion, fully counterbalances this difference, and makes the spirit of liberty still more high and haughty than in those to the Northward. It is, that in Virginia and the Carolinas they have a vast multitude of slaves. Where this is the case in any part of the world, those who are free are by far the most proud and jealous of their freedom. Freedom is to them not only an enjoyment, but a kind of rank and privilege. Not seeing there, that freedom, as in countries where it is a common blessing, and as broad and general as the air,[3] may be united with much abject toil, with great misery, with all the exterior of servitude, liberty looks, amongst them, like something that is more noble and liberal. I do not mean, Sir, to commend the superior morality of this sentiment, which has at

[3] *Macbeth*, III. 4. — PAYNE.

least as much pride as virtue in it; but I cannot alter the nature of man. The fact is so; and these people of the Southern Colonies are much more strongly, and with a higher and more stubborn spirit, attached to liberty, than those to the Northward. Such were all the ancient commonwealths; such were our Gothick ancestors; such in our days were the Poles; and such will be all masters of slaves who are not slaves themselves. In such a people, the haughtiness of domination combines with the spirit of freedom, fortifies it, and renders it invincible.

Permit me, Sir, to add another circumstance in our Colonies, which contributes no mean part towards the growth and effect of this untractable spirit. I mean their education. In no country perhaps in the world is the law so general a study. The profession itself is numerous and powerful; and in most provinces it takes the lead. The greater number of the deputies sent to the Congress were lawyers. But all who read (and most do read), endeavour to obtain some smattering in that science. I have been told by an eminent bookseller, that in no branch of his business, after tracts of popular devotion, were so many books as those on the law exported to the plantations. The Colonists have now fallen into the way of printing them for their own use. I hear that they have sold nearly as many of Blackstone's Commentaries in America as in England. General Gage marks out this disposition very particularly in a letter on your table. He states that all the people in his Government are lawyers, or smatterers in law; and that in Boston they have been enabled, by successful chicane, wholly to evade many parts of one of your capital penal constitutions. The smartness of debate will say that this knowledge ought to teach them more clearly the rights of legislature, their obligations to obedience, and the penalties of rebellion. All this is mighty[4] well. But my honourable and learned friend[5] on the floor, who condescends to mark what I say for animadversion, will disdain that ground. He has heard, as well as I, that when great honours and great emoluments do not win over this knowl-

[4] Now colloquial. [5] The Attorney-General (Thurlow). — PAYNE.

edge to the service of the State, it is a formidable adversary to Government. If the spirit be not tamed and broken by these happy methods, it is stubborn and litigious. *Abeunt studia in mores.*[6] This study renders men acute, inquisitive, dexterous, prompt in attack, ready in defence, full of resources. In other countries, the people, more simple, and of a less mercurial cast, judge of an ill principle in government only by an actual grievance; here they anticipate the evil, and judge of the pressure of the grievance by the badness of the principle. They augur misgovernment at a distance; and snuff the approach of tyranny in every tainted breeze.

The last cause of this disobedient spirit in the Colonies is hardly less powerful than the rest, as it is not merely moral, but laid deep in the natural constitution of things. Three thousand miles of ocean lie between you and them. No contrivance can prevent the effect of this distance in weakening government. Seas roll, and months pass, between the order and the execution; and the want of a speedy explanation of a single point is enough to defeat a whole system. You have, indeed, "winged ministers of vengeance," who carry your bolts in their pounces to the remotest verge of the sea.[7] But there a power steps in, that limits the arrogance of raging passions and furious elements, and says, "So far shalt thou go, and no farther."[8] Who are you, that you should fret and rage, and bite the chains of Nature? — nothing worse happens to you than does to all nations who have extensive empire; and it happens in all the forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk cannot govern Egypt and Arabia, and Kurdistan, as he governs Thrace; nor has he the same dominion in Crimea and Algiers which he has at Brusa and

[6] *Studies pass into character.* — OVID, *Heroides*, Epistle XV. 83. The quotation is evidently adopted from Bacon's Essay "Of Studies." — PAYNE.

[7] Payne refers to MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, I. 170, and III. 229, as well as to HORACE, *Odes*, IV. 1.

[8] Job xxxviii. 11.

Smyrna. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. The Sultan gets such obedience as he can. He governs with a loose rein, that he may govern at all; and the whole of the force and vigour of his authority in his centre is derived from a prudent relaxation in all his borders. Spain, in her provinces, is perhaps not so well obeyed as you are in yours. She complies too; she submits; she watches times. This is the immutable condition, the eternal law, of extensive and detached empire.[9]

Then, Sir, from these six capital sources; of descent; of form of government; of religion in the northern provinces; of manners in the southern; of education; of the remoteness of situation from the first mover of government; from all these causes a fierce spirit of liberty has grown up. It has grown with the growth of the people in your Colonies, and increased with the increase of their wealth; a spirit, that unhappily meeting with an exercise of power in England, which, however lawful, is not reconcileable to any ideas of liberty, much less with theirs, has kindled this flame that is ready to consume us.

I do not mean to commend either the spirit in this excess, or the moral causes which produce it. Perhaps a more smooth and accommodating spirit of freedom in them would be more acceptable to us. Perhaps ideas of liberty might be desired more reconcileable with an arbitrary and boundless authority. Perhaps we might wish the Colonists to be persuaded that their liberty is more secure when held in trust for them by us (as their guardians during a perpetual minority) than with any part of it in their own hands. The question is, not whether their spirit deserves praise or blame, but what, in the name of God, shall we do with it? You have before you the object, such as it is, with all its glories, with all its imperfections on its head. You see the magnitude, the importance, the temper, the habits, the disorders. By all these considerations we are strongly urged to determine something concerning it. We are called upon to fix some rule and line for

[9] Payne thinks that Burke generalizes from two bad instances, Spain and Turkey; that it is otherwise with England and Russia.

our future conduct, which may give a little stability to our politics, and prevent the return of such unhappy deliberations as the present. Every such return will bring the matter before us in a still more untractable form. For, what astonishing and incredible things have we not seen already! What monsters have not been generated from this unnatural contention! Whilst every principle of authority and resistance has been pushed, upon both sides, as far as it would go, there is nothing so solid and certain, either in reasoning or in practice, that has not been shaken. Until very lately, all authority in America seemed to be nothing but an emanation from yours. Even the popular part of the Colony Constitution derived all its activity, and its first vital movement, from the pleasure of the Crown. We thought, Sir, that the utmost which the discontented Colonists could do was to disturb authority; we never dreamt they could of themselves supply it; knowing in general what an operose business it is to establish a government absolutely new. But having, for our purposes in this contention, resolved that none but an obedient assembly should sit; the humours of the people there finding all passage through the legal channel stopped, with great violence broke out another way. Some provinces have tried their experiment, as we have tried ours; and theirs has succeeded. They have formed a government sufficient for its purposes, without the bustle of a revolution, or the troublesome formality of an election. Evident necessity and tacit consent have done the business in an instant. So well they have done it, that Lord Dunmore[10] — the account is among the fragments on your table — tells you that the new institution is infinitely better obeyed than the ancient government ever was in its most fortunate periods. Obedience is what makes government, and not the names by which it is called; not the name of Governor, as formerly, or Committee, as at present. This new

[10] Lord Dunmore fled from Williamsburg, Virginia, thus abdicating his authority, June 8, 1775, and the Convention that met in July appointed the famous Committee of Safety, which governed the State until Patrick Henry became Governor in July, 1776.

government has originated directly from the people; and was not transmitted through any of the ordinary artificial media of a positive constitution. It was not a manufacture ready formed, and transmitted to them in that condition from England. The evil arising from hence is this, that the Colonists having once found the possibility of enjoying the advantages of order in the midst of a struggle for liberty, such struggles will not henceforward seem so terrible to the settled and sober part of mankind as they had appeared before the trial.

Pursuing the same plan of punishing by the denial of the exercise of government to still greater lengths, we wholly abrogated the ancient government of Massachusetts. We were confident that the first feeling, if not the very prospect of anarchy, would instantly enforce a complete submission. The experiment was tried. A new, strange, unexpected phase of things appeared. Anarchy is found tolerable. A vast province has now subsisted, and subsisted in a considerable degree of health and vigour, for near a twelvemonth, without Governor, without public council, without judges, without executive magistrates. How long it will continue in this state, or what may arise out of this unheard-of situation, how can the wisest of us conjecture? Our late experience has taught us that many of those fundamental principles formerly believed infallible, are either not of the importance they were imagined to be; or that we have not at all adverted to some other far more important and far more powerful principles, which entirely overrule those we had considered as omnipotent. I am much against any further experiments, which tend to put to the proof any more of these allowed opinions, which contribute so much to the public tranquillity. In effect, we suffer as much at home by this loosening of all ties, and this concussion of all established opinions, as we do abroad. For, in order to prove that the Americans have no right to their liberties, we are every day endeavouring to subvert the maxims which preserve the whole spirit of our own. To prove that the Americans ought not to be free, we are obliged to depreciate the value of freedom itself; and we

never seem to gain a paltry advantage over them in debate, without attacking some of those principles, or deriding some of those feelings, for which our ancestors have shed their blood.

But, Sir, in wishing to put an end to pernicious experiments, I do not mean to preclude the fullest inquiry. Far from it. Far from deciding on a sudden or partial view, I would patiently go round and round the subject, and survey it minutely in every possible aspect. Sir, if I were capable of engaging you to an equal attention, I would state that, as far as I am capable of discerning, there are but three ways of proceeding relative to this stubborn spirit, which prevails in your Colonies, and disturbs your government. These are: to change that spirit, as inconvenient, by removing the causes; to prosecute it as criminal; or, to comply with it as necessary. I would not be guilty of an imperfect enumeration; I can think of but these three. Another has indeed been started, that of giving up the Colonies; but it met so slight a reception, that I do not think myself obliged to dwell a great while upon it. It is nothing but a little sally of anger, like the forwardness of peevish children, who, when they cannot get all they would have, are resolved to take nothing.

The first of these plans, to change the spirit as inconvenient, by removing the causes, I think is the most like a systematic proceeding. It is radical in its principle; but it is attended with great difficulties, some of them little short, as I conceive, of impossibilities. This will appear by examining into the plans which have been proposed.

As the growing population in the Colonies is evidently one cause of their resistance, it was last session mentioned in both Houses, by men of weight, and received not without applause, that in order to check this evil, it would be proper for the Crown to make no further grants of land. But to this scheme there are two objections. The first, that there is already so much unsettled land in private hands as to afford room for an immense future population, although the Crown not only withheld its grants, but annihilated its soil. If this be the case, then the only effect of

this avarice of desolation, this hoarding of a royal wilderness, would be to raise the value of the possessions in the hands of the great private monopolists, without any adequate check to the growing and alarming mischief of population.

But if you stopped your grants, what would be the consequence? The people would occupy without grants. They have already so occupied in many places. You cannot station garrisons in every part of these deserts. If you drive the people from one place, they will carry on their annual tillage, and remove with their flocks and herds to another. Many of the people in the back settlements are already little attached to particular situations. Already they have topped the Apalachian mountains. From thence they behold before them an immense plain, one vast, rich, level meadow; a square of five hundred miles. Over this they would wander without a possibility of restraint; they would change their manners with the habits of their life; would soon forget a government by which they were disowned; would become hordes of English Tartars; and pouring down upon your unfortified frontiers a fierce and irresistible cavalry, become masters of your Governors and your counsellors, your collectors and comptrollers, and of all the slaves that adhered to them. Such would, and in no long time must, be the effect of attempting to forbid as a crime, and to suppress as an evil, the command and blessing of Providence, "Encrease and Multiply."[11] Such would be the happy result of an endeavour to keep, as a lair of wild beasts, that earth which God, by an express charter, has *given to the children of men*. Far different, and surely much wiser, has been our policy hitherto. Hitherto we have invited our people, by every kind of bounty, to fixed establishments. We have invited the husbandman to look to authority for his title. We have taught him piously to believe in the mysterious virtue of wax and parchment. We have thrown each tract of land, as it was peopled, into districts, that the ruling power should never be wholly out of

[11] Payne refers to *Paradise Lost*, X. 730, and to the Vulgate version. "*Crescite et multiplicamini.*"

sight. We have settled all we could; and we have carefully attended every settlement with government.

Adhering, Sir, as I do, to this policy, as well as for the reasons I have just given, I think this new project of hedging-in population to be neither prudent nor practicable.

To impoverish the Colonies in general, and in particular to arrest the noble course of their marine enterprises, would be a more easy task. I freely confess it. We have shown a disposition to a system of this kind; a disposition even to continue the restraint after the offence; looking on ourselves as rivals to our Colonies, and persuaded that of course we must gain all that they shall lose. Much mischief we may certainly do. The power inadequate to all other things is often more than sufficient for this. I do not look on the direct and immediate power of the Colonies to resist our violence as very formidable. In this, however, I may be mistaken. But when I consider that we have Colonies for no purpose but to be serviceable to us, it seems to my poor understanding a little preposterous to make them unserviceable, in order to keep them obedient. It is, in truth, nothing more than the old, and, as I thought, exploded problem of tyranny, which proposes to beggar its subjects into submission. But remember, when you have completed your system of impoverishment, that Nature still proceeds in her ordinary course; that discontent will increase with misery; and that there are critical moments in the fortune of all States, when they who are too weak to contribute to your prosperity may be strong enough to complete your ruin. *Spoliatis arma supersunt.*[12]

The temper and character which prevail in our Colonies, are, I am afraid, unalterable by any human art. We cannot, I fear, falsify the pedigree of this fierce people, and persuade them that they are not sprung from a nation in whose veins the blood of freedom circulates. The language in which they would hear you tell them this tale would detect the imposition: your speech would

[12] *Arms remain to the despoiled.* — JUVENAL, *Satires*, VIII. 124.

betray you. An Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery.

I think it is nearly as little in our power to change their republican religion as their free descent; or to substitute the Roman Catholic, as a penalty; or the Church of England, as an improvement. The mode of inquisition and dragooning is going out of fashion in the Old World, and I should not confide much to their efficacy in the New. The education of the Americans is also on the same unalterable bottom with their religion. You cannot persuade them to burn their books of curious science; to banish their lawyers from their courts of laws; or to quench the lights of their assemblies, by refusing to choose those persons who are best read in their privileges. It would be no less impracticable to think of wholly annihilating the popular assemblies, in which these lawyers sit. The army, by which we must govern in their place, would be far more chargeable [13] to us; not quite so effectual; and perhaps, in the end, full as difficult to be kept in obedience.

With regard to the high aristocratic spirit of Virginia and the Southern Colonies, it has been proposed, I know, to reduce it, by declaring a general enfranchisement of their slaves. This project has had its advocates and panegyrists; yet I never could argue myself into any opinion of it. Slaves are often much attached to their masters. A general wild offer of liberty would not always be accepted. History furnishes few instances of it. It is sometimes as hard to persuade slaves to be free, as it is to compel freemen to be slaves; and in this auspicious scheme we should have both these pleasing tasks on our hands at once. But when we talk of enfranchisement, do we not perceive that the American master may enfranchise too, and arm servile hands in defence of freedom? A measure to which other people have had recourse more than once, and not without success, in a desperate situation of their affairs.

Slaves as these unfortunate black people are, and dull as all men are from slavery, must they not a little suspect the offer of freedom

[13] expensive.

from that very nation which has sold them to their present masters? from that nation, one of whose causes of quarrel with those masters is their refusal to deal any more in that inhuman traffic. An offer of freedom from England would come rather oddly, shipped to them in an African vessel, which is refused an entry into the ports of Virginia or Carolina, with a cargo of three hundred Angola negroes. It would be curious to see the Guinea captain attempting at the same instant to publish his proclamation of liberty, and to advertise his sale of slaves.

But let us suppose all these moral difficulties got over. The ocean remains. You cannot pump this dry; and as long as it continues in its present bed, so long all the causes which weaken authority by distance will continue. "Ye gods, annihilate but space and time, and make two lovers happy!"[14] was a pious and passionate prayer; but just as reasonable as many of the serious wishes of very grave and solemn politicians.

If then, Sir, it seems almost desperate to think of any alternative course for changing the moral causes, and not quite easy to remove the natural, which produce prejudices irreconcileable to the late exercise of our authority, but that the spirit infallibly will continue; and, continuing, will produce such effects as now embarrass us; the second mode under consideration is to prosecute that spirit in its overt acts as criminal.

At this proposition I must pause a moment. The thing seems a great deal too big for my ideas of jurisprudence. It should seem to my way of conceiving such matters, that there is a very wide difference in reason and policy between the mode of proceeding on the irregular conduct of scattered individuals, or even of bands of men, who disturb order within the State, and the civil dissensions which may, from time to time, on great questions, agitate the several communities which compose a great empire. It looks to me to be narrow and pedantic to apply the ordinary

[14] This piece of fustian is taken from *Martinus Scriblerus, Of the Art of Sinking in Poetry*, where it is cited without name. It is said to come from one of Dryden's plays. — PAYNE.

ideas of criminal justice to this great public contest. I do not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.[15] I cannot insult and ridicule the feelings of millions of my fellow-creatures, as Sir Edward Coke insulted one excellent individual (Sir Walter Rawleigh) at the bar. I hope I am not ripe to pass sentence on the gravest public bodies, entrusted with magistracies of great authority and dignity, and charged with the safety of their fellow-citizens, upon the very same title that I am. I really think that, for wise men, this is not judicious; for sober men, not decent; for minds tinctured with humanity, not mild and merciful.

Perhaps, Sir, I am mistaken in my idea of an empire, as distinguished from a single State or kingdom. But my idea of it is this: that an empire is the aggregate of many States under one common head; whether this head be a monarch, or a presiding republic. It does, in such constitutions, frequently happen (and nothing but the dismal, cold, dead uniformity of servitude can prevent its happening) that the subordinate parts have many local privileges and immunities. Between these privileges and the supreme common authority the line may be extremely nice. Of course, disputes, often, too, very bitter disputes, and much ill blood, will arise. But though every privilege is an exemption (in the case) from the ordinary exercise of the supreme authority, it is no denial of it. The claim of a privilege seems rather, *ex vi termini*,[16] to imply a superior power. For to talk of the privileges of a State, or of a person, who has no superior, is hardly any better than speaking nonsense. Now, in such unfortunate quarrels among the component parts of a great political union of communities, I can scarcely conceive anything more completely imprudent than for the head of the empire to insist that, if any privilege is pleaded against his will, or his acts, his whole authority is denied; instantly to proclaim rebellion, to beat to arms, and to put the offending provinces under the ban. Will not this, Sir, very soon teach the

[15] A sentence that has passed into the literature of English-speaking people.

[16] *from the force (or meaning) of the expression.*

provinces to make no distinctions on their part? Will it not teach them that the Government, against which a claim of liberty is tantamount to high treason, is a Government to which submission is equivalent to slavery? It may not always be quite convenient to impress dependent communities with such an idea.

We are indeed, in all disputes with the Colonies, by the necessity of things, the judge. It is true, Sir. But I confess that the character of judge in my own cause is a thing that frightens me. Instead of filling me with pride, I am exceedingly humbled by it. I cannot proceed with a stern, assured, judicial confidence, until I find myself in something more like a judicial character. I must have these hesitations as long as I am compelled to recollect that, in my little reading upon such contests as these, the sense of mankind has, at least, as often decided against the superior as the subordinate power. Sir, let me add too, that the opinion of my having some abstract right in my favour would not put me much at my ease in passing sentence, unless I could be sure that there were no rights which, in their exercise under certain circumstances, were not the most odious of all wrongs, and the most vexatious of all injustice. Sir, these considerations have great weight with me, when I find things so circumstanced, that I see the same party at once a civil litigant against me in point of right; and a culprit before me, while I sit as a criminal judge on acts of his, whose moral quality is to be decided upon the merits of that very litigation. Men are every now and then put, by the complexity of human affairs, into strange situations; but justice is the same, let the judge be in what situation he will.

There is, Sir, also a circumstance which convinces me that this mode of criminal proceeding is not (at least in the present stage of our contest) altogether expedient; which is nothing less than the conduct of those very persons who have seemed to adopt that mode, by lately declaring a rebellion in Massachusetts Bay, as they had formerly addressed to have traitors brought hither, under an Act of Henry the Eighth, for trial. For though rebellion is declared, it is not proceeded against as such; nor have any steps

been taken towards the apprehension or conviction of any individual offender, either on our late or our former Address; but modes of public coercion have been adopted, and such as have much more resemblance to a sort of qualified hostility towards an independent power than the punishment of rebellious subjects. All this seems rather inconsistent; but it shows how difficult it is to apply these juridical ideas to our present case.

In this situation, let us seriously and coolly ponder. What is it we have got by all our menaces, which have been many and ferocious? What advantage have we derived from the penal laws we have rightly passed, and which, for the time, have been severe and numerous? What advances have we made towards our object, by the sending of a force which, by land and sea, is no contemptible strength? Has the disorder abated? Nothing less. When I see things in this situation, after such confident hopes, bold promises, and active exertions, I cannot for my life avoid a suspicion that the plan itself is not correctly right.

If then the removal of the causes of this spirit of American liberty be, for the greater part, or rather entirely, impracticable; if the ideas of criminal process be inapplicable, or if applicable, are in the highest degree inexpedient; what way yet remains? No way is open but the third and last — to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as a necessary evil.

If we adopt this mode; if we mean to conciliate and concede; let us see of what nature the concession ought to be: to ascertain the nature of our concession we must look at their complaint. The Colonies complain that they have not the characteristic mark and seal of British freedom. They complain that they are taxed in a Parliament in which they are not represented. If you mean to satisfy them at all, you must satisfy them with regard to this complaint. If you mean to please any people, you must give them the boon which they ask; not what you may think better for them, but of a kind totally different. Such an act may be a wise regulation, but it is no concession; whereas our present theme is the mode of giving satisfaction.

Sir, I think you must perceive that I am resolved this day to have nothing at all to do with the question of the right of taxation. Some gentlemen startle — but it is true; I put it totally out of the question. It is less than nothing in my consideration. I do not indeed wonder, nor will you, Sir, that gentlemen of profound learning are fond of displaying it on this profound subject. But my consideration is narrow, confined, and wholly limited to the policy of the question. I do not examine whether the giving away a man's money be a power excepted and reserved out of the general trust of government; and how far all mankind, in all forms of polity, are entitled to an exercise of that right by the charter of Nature. Or whether, on the contrary, a right of taxation is necessarily involved in the general principle of legislation, and inseparable from the ordinary supreme power. These are deep questions, where great names militate against each other; where reason is perplexed; and an appeal to authorities only thickens the confusion. For high and reverend authorities lift up their heads on both sides; and there is no sure footing in the middle. This point "is the great Serbonian bog, Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old, Where armies whole have sunk."[17] I do not intend to be overwhelmed in that bog, though in such respectable company. The question with me is, not whether you have a right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not your interest to make them happy. It is not what a lawyer tells me I may do, but what humanity, reason, and justice tell me I ought to do. Is a politic act the worse for being a generous one? Is no concession proper, but that which is made from your want of right to keep what you grant? Or does it lessen the grace or dignity of relaxing in the exercise of an odious claim, because you have your evidence-room full of titles, and your magazines stuffed with arms to enforce them? What signify all those titles and all those arms? Of what avail are they, when the reason of the thing tells me that the assertion of my title is the loss of my suit; and that I could do nothing but wound myself by the use of my own weapons?

[17] *Paradise Lost*, II. 592.

Such is steadfastly my opinion of the absolute necessity of keeping up the concord of this empire by a unity of spirit, though in a diversity of operations, that, if I were sure the Colonists had, at their leaving this country, sealed a regular compact of servitude; that they had solemnly abjured all the rights of citizens; that they had made a vow to renounce all ideas of liberty for them and their posterity to all generations; yet I should hold myself obliged to conform to the temper I found universally prevalent in my own day, and to govern two million of men, impatient of servitude, on the principles of freedom. I am not determining a point of law; I am restoring tranquillity; and the general character and situation of a people must determine what sort of government is fitted for them. That point nothing else can or ought to determine.

My idea, therefore, without considering whether we yield as matter of right, or grant as matter of favour, is to *admit the people of our Colonies into an interest in the Constitution;* and, by recording that admission in the Journals of Parliament, to give them as strong an assurance as the nature of the thing will admit, that we mean for ever to adhere to that solemn declaration of systematic indulgence.

Some years ago, the repeal of a Revenue Act, upon its understood principle, might have served to show that we intended an unconditional abatement of the exercise of a taxing power. Such a measure was then sufficient to remove all suspicion, and to give perfect content. But unfortunate events, since that time, may make something further necessary; and not more necessary for the satisfaction of the Colonies, than for the dignity and consistency of our own future proceedings.

XXIII.

EDWARD GIBBON.

(1737–1794.)

MEMOIRS OF MY LIFE AND WRITINGS.

[Written in 1788.]

A TRAVELLER, who visits Oxford or Cambridge, is surprised and edified by the apparent order and tranquillity that prevail in the seats of the English muses. In the most celebrated universities of Holland, Germany, and Italy, the students, who swarm from different countries, are loosely dispersed in private lodgings at the houses of the burghers: they dress according to their fancy and fortune; and in the intemperate quarrels of youth and wine, their *swords*, though less frequently than of old, are sometimes stained with each other's blood. The use of arms is banished from our English universities; the uniform habit of the academics, the square cap, and black gown, is adapted to the civil and even clerical profession: and from the doctor in divinity to the undergraduate, the degrees of learning and age are externally distinguished. Instead of being scattered in a town, the students of Oxford and Cambridge are united in colleges; their maintenance is provided at their own expense, or that of the founders; and the stated hours of the hall and chapel represent the discipline of a regular, and, as it were, a religious community. The eyes of the traveller are attracted by the size or beauty of the public edifices; and the principal colleges appear to be so many palaces, which a liberal nation has erected and endowed for the habitation of science. My own introduction to the university of Oxford forms

a new æra in my life; and at the distance of forty years I still remember my first emotions of surprise and satisfaction. In my fifteenth year I felt myself suddenly raised from a boy to a man; the persons whom I respected as my superiors in age and academical rank, entertained me with every mark of attention and civility; and my vanity was flattered by the velvet cap and silk gown, which distinguish a gentleman commoner from a plebeian student. A decent allowance, more money than a schoolboy had ever seen, was at my own disposal; and I might command, among the tradesmen of Oxford, an indefinite and dangerous latitude of credit. A key was delivered into my hands, which gave me the free use of a numerous and learned library; my apartment consisted of three elegant and well-furnished rooms in the new building, a stately pile, of Magdalen College; and the adjacent walks, had they been frequented by Plato's disciples, might have been compared to the Attic shade on the banks of the Ilissus. Such was the fair prospect of my entrance (April 3, 1752) into the university of Oxford.

A venerable prelate, whose taste and erudition must reflect honour on the society in which they were formed, has drawn a very interesting picture of his academical life. — "I was educated (says Bishop Lowth) in the UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD. I enjoyed all the advantages, both public and private, which that famous seat of learning so largely affords. I spent many years in that illustrious society, in a well-regulated course of useful discipline and studies, and in the agreeable and improving commerce[1] of gentlemen and of scholars; in a society where emulation without envy, ambition without jealousy, contention without animosity, incited industry, and awakened genius; where a liberal pursuit of knowledge, and a genuine freedom of thought, were raised, encouraged, and pushed forward by example, by commendation, and by authority. I breathed the same atmosphere that the HOOKERS, the CHILLINGWORTHS, and the LOCKES had breathed before; whose benevolence and humanity were as extensive as their vast genius

[1] intercourse.

and comprehensive knowledge; who always treated their adversaries with civility and respect; who made candour, moderation, and liberal judgment as much the rule and law as the subject of their discourse. And do you reproach me with my education in this place, and with my relation to this most respectable body, which I shall always esteem my greatest advantage and my highest honour?" I transcribe with pleasure this eloquent passage, without examining what benefits or what rewards were derived by Hooker, or Chillingworth, or Locke, from their academical institution; without inquiring, whether in this angry controversy the spirit of Lowth himself is purified from the intolerant zeal, which Warburton had ascribed to the genius of the place. It may indeed be observed, that the atmosphere of Oxford did not agree with Mr. Locke's constitution; and that the philosopher justly despised the academical bigots, who expelled his person and condemned his principles. The expression of gratitude is a virtue and a pleasure: a liberal mind will delight to cherish and celebrate the memory of its parents; and the teachers of science are the parents of the mind. I applaud the filial piety, which it is impossible for me to imitate; since I must not confess an imaginary debt, to assume the merit of a just or generous retribution. To the university of Oxford *I* acknowledge no obligation; and she will as cheerfully renounce me for a son, as I am willing to disclaim her for a mother. I spent fourteen months at Magdalen College; they proved the fourteen months the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life: the reader will pronounce between the school and the scholar; but I cannot affect to believe that Nature had disqualified me for all literary pursuits. The spacious and ready excuse of my tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure, may doubtless be alleged; nor do I wish to defraud such excuses of their proper weight. Yet in my sixteenth year I was not devoid of capacity or application; even my childish reading had displayed an early though blind propensity for books; and the shallow flood might have been taught to flow in a deep channel and a clear stream. In the discipline of a well-

constituted academy, under the guidance of skilful and vigilant professors, I should gradually have risen from translations to originals, from the Latin to the Greek classics, from dead languages to living science: my hours would have been occupied by useful and agreeable studies, the wanderings of fancy would have been restrained, and I should have escaped the temptations of idleness, which finally precipitated my departure from Oxford.

Perhaps in a separate annotation I may coolly examine the fabulous and real antiquities of our sister universities, a question which has kindled such fierce and foolish disputes among their fanatic sons. In the meanwhile it will be acknowledged that these venerable bodies are sufficiently old to partake of all the prejudices and infirmities of age. The schools of Oxford and Cambridge were founded in a dark age of false and barbarous science; and they are still tainted with the vices of their origin. Their primitive discipline was adapted to the education of priests and monks; and the government still remains in the hands of the clergy, an order of men whose manners are remote from the present world, and whose eyes are dazzled by the light of philosophy. The legal incorporation of these societies by the charters of popes and kings had given them a monopoly of the public instruction; and the spirit of monopolists is narrow, lazy, and oppressive; their work is more costly and less productive than that of independent artists; and the new improvements so eagerly grasped by the competition of freedom, are admitted with slow and sullen reluctance in those proud corporations, above the fear of a rival, and below the confession of an error. We may scarcely hope that any reformation will be a voluntary act; and so deeply are they rooted in law and prejudice, that even the omnipotence of parliament would shrink from an inquiry into the state and abuses of the two universities.[2]

The use of academical degrees, as old as the thirteenth century,

[2] We must remember that Gibbon was writing in 1788. Parliament has appointed University Commissions, and there have been many reforms at these great centres of learning.

is visibly borrowed from the mechanic corporations; in which an apprentice, after serving his time, obtains a testimonial of his skill, and a licence to practise his trade and mystery.[3] It is not my design to depreciate those honours, which could never gratify or disappoint my ambition; and I should applaud the institution, if the degrees of bachelor or licentiate were bestowed as the reward of manly and successful study: if the name and rank of doctor or master were strictly reserved for the professors of science, who have approved their title to the public esteem.

In all the universities of Europe, excepting our own, the languages and sciences are distributed among a numerous list of effective professors: the students, according to their taste, their calling, and their diligence, apply themselves to the proper masters; and in the annual repetition of public and private lectures, these masters are assiduously employed. Our curiosity may inquire what number of professors has been instituted at Oxford? (for I shall now confine myself to my own university;) by whom are they appointed, and what may be the probable chances of merit or incapacity; how many are stationed to the three faculties, and how many are left for the liberal arts? what is the form, and what the substance, of their lessons? But all these questions are silenced by one short and singular answer, "That in the university of Oxford, the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether even the pretence of teaching." Incredible as the fact may appear, I must rest my belief on the positive and impartial evidence of a master of moral and political wisdom, who had himself resided at Oxford. Dr. Adam Smith assigns as the cause of their indolence, that, instead of being paid by voluntary contributions, which would urge them to increase the number, and to deserve the gratitude of their pupils, the Oxford professors are secure in the enjoyment of a fixed stipend, without the necessity of labour, or the apprehension of controul. It has indeed been observed, nor is the observation absurd, that excepting in experimental sciences, which demand a

[3] calling, or occupation.

costly apparatus and a dexterous hand, the many valuable treatises that have been published on every subject of learning, may now supersede the ancient mode of oral instruction. Were this principle true in its utmost latitude, I should only infer that the offices and salaries, which are become useless, ought without delay to be abolished. But there still remains a material difference between a book and a professor; the hour of the lecture enforces attendance; attention is fixed by the presence, the voice, and the occasional questions of the teacher; the most idle will carry something away; and the more diligent will compare the instructions, which they have heard in the school, with the volumes, which they peruse in their chamber. The advice of a skilful professor will adapt a course of reading to every mind and every situation; his authority will discover, admonish, and at last chastise the negligence of his disciples; and his vigilant inquiries will ascertain the steps of their literary progress. Whatever science he professes he may illustrate in a series of discourses, composed in the leisure of his closet, pronounced on public occasions, and finally delivered to the press. I observe with pleasure, that in the university of Oxford Dr. Lowth, with equal eloquence and erudition, has executed this task in his incomparable *Prælections* on the Poetry of the Hebrews.

The college of St. Mary Magdalen was founded in the fifteenth century by Wainfleet, bishop of Winchester; and now consists of a president, forty fellows, and a number of inferior students. It is esteemed one of the largest and most wealthy of our academical corporations, which may be compared to the Benedictine abbeys of Catholic countries; and I have loosely heard that the estates belonging to Magdalen College, which are leased by those indulgent landlords at small quit-rents and occasional fines, might be raised, in the hands of private avarice, to an annual revenue of nearly thirty thousand pounds. Our colleges are supposed to be schools of science, as well as of education; nor is it unreasonable to expect that a body of literary men, devoted to a life of celibacy, exempt from the care of their own subsistence, and amply pro-

vided with books, should devote their leisure to the prosecution of study, and that some effects of their studies should be manifested to the world. The shelves of their library groan under the weight of the Benedictine folios, of the editions of the fathers, and the collections of the middle ages, which have issued from the single abbey of St. Germain de Préz at Paris. A composition of genius must be the offspring of one mind; but such works of industry, as may be divided among many hands, and must be continued during many years, are the peculiar province of a laborious community. If I inquire into the manufactures of the monks of Magdalen, if I extend the inquiry to the other colleges of Oxford and Cambridge, a silent blush, or a scornful frown, will be the only reply. The fellows or monks of my time were decent easy men, who supinely enjoyed the gifts of the founder; their days were filled by a series of uniform employments; the chapel and the hall, the coffee-house and the common room, till they retired, weary and well satisfied, to a long slumber. From the toil of reading, or thinking, or writing, they had absolved their conscience; and the first shoots of learning and ingenuity withered on the ground, without yielding any fruits to the owners or the public. As a gentleman commoner, I was admitted to the society of the fellows, and fondly expected that some questions of literature would be the amusing and instructive topics of their discourse. Their conversation stagnated in a round of college business, Tory politics, personal anecdotes, and private scandal: their dull and deep potations excused the brisk intemperance of youth; and their constitutional toasts were not expressive of the most lively loyalty for the house of Hanover. A general election was now approaching: the great Oxfordshire contest already blazed with all the malevolence of party-zeal. Magdalen College was devoutly attached to the old interest! and the names of Wenman and Dashwood were more frequently pronounced, than those of Cicero and Chrysostom. The example of the senior fellows could not inspire the under-graduates with a liberal spirit or studious emulation: and I cannot describe, as I never knew,

the discipline of college. Some duties may possibly have been imposed on the poor scholars, whose ambition aspired to the peaceful honours of a fellowship (*ascribi quietis ordinibus . . . Deorum*);[4] but no independent members were admitted below the rank of a gentleman commoner, and our velvet cap was the cap of liberty. A tradition prevailed that some of our predecessors had spoken Latin declamations in the hall; but of this ancient custom no vestige remained: the obvious methods of public exercises and examinations were totally unknown; and I have never heard that either the president or the society interfered in the private economy of the tutors and their pupils.

The silence of the Oxford professors, which deprives the youth of public instruction, is imperfectly supplied by the tutors, as they are styled, of the several colleges. Instead of confining themselves to a single science, which had satisfied the ambition of Burman or Bernoulli, they teach, or promise to teach, either history or mathematics, or ancient literature, or moral philosophy; and as it is possible that they may be defective in all, it is highly probable that of some they will be ignorant. They are paid, indeed, by voluntary contributions; but their appointment depends on the head of the house: their diligence is voluntary, and will consequently be languid, while the pupils themselves, or their parents, are not indulged in the liberty of choice or change. The first tutor into whose hands I was resigned appears to have been one of the best of the tribe: Dr. Waldegrave was a learned and pious man, of a mild disposition, strict morals, and abstemious life, who seldom mingled in the politics or the jollity of the college. But his knowledge of the world was confined to the university; his learning was of the last, rather than the present age; his temper was indolent; his faculties, which were not of the first rate, had been relaxed by the climate, and he was satisfied, like his fellows, with the slight and superficial discharge of an important trust. As soon as my tutor had sounded the insufficiency of his

[4] *to be enrolled in the quiet orders of the gods.* — HORACE, *Odes*, III. 3, 35–6.

pupil in school-learning, he proposed that we should read every morning from ten to eleven the comedies of Terence. The sum of my improvement in the university of Oxford is confined to three or four Latin plays; and even the study of an elegant classic, which might have been illustrated by a comparison of ancient and modern theatres, was reduced to a dry and literal interpretation of the author's text. During the first weeks I constantly attended these lessons in my tutor's room; but as they appeared equally devoid of profit and pleasure I was once tempted to try the experiment of a formal apology. The apology was accepted with a smile. I repeated the offence with less ceremony; the excuse was admitted with the same indulgence: the slightest motive of laziness or indisposition, the most trifling avocation at home or abroad, was allowed as a worthy impediment; nor did my tutor appear conscious of my absence or neglect. Had the hour of lecture been constantly filled, a single hour was a small portion of my academic leisure. No plan of study was recommended for my use; no exercises were prescribed for his inspection; and, at the most precious season of youth, whole days and weeks were suffered to elapse without labour or amusement, without advice or account. I should have listened to the voice of reason and of my tutor; his mild behaviour had gained my confidence. I preferred his society to that of the younger students; and in our evening walks to the top of Heddington-hill, we freely conversed on a variety of subjects. Since the days of Pocock and Hyde, Oriental learning has always been the pride of Oxford, and I once expressed an inclination to study Arabic. His prudence discouraged this childish fancy; but he neglected the fair occasion of directing the ardour of a curious mind. During my absence in the summer vacation, Dr. Waldegrave accepted a college living at Washington in Sussex, and on my return I no longer found him at Oxford. From that time I have lost sight of my first tutor; but at the end of thirty years (1781) he was still alive; and the practice of exercise and temperance had entitled him to a healthy old age.

The long recess between the Trinity and Michaelmas terms empties the colleges of Oxford, as well as the courts of Westminster. I spent, at my father's house at Beriton in Hampshire, the two months of August and September. It is whimsical enough, that as soon as I left Magdalen College, my taste for books began to revive; but it was the same blind and boyish taste for the pursuit of exotic history. Unprovided with original learning, unformed in the habits of thinking, unskilled in the arts of composition, I resolved — to write a book. The title of this first Essay, *The Age of Sesostris*, was perhaps suggested by Voltaire's Age of Lewis XIV. which was new and popular; but my sole object was to investigate the probable date of the life and reign of the conqueror of Asia. I was then enamoured of Sir John Marsham's Canon Chronicus, an elaborate work, of whose merits and defects I was not yet qualified to judge. According to his specious, though narrow plan, I settled my hero about the time of Solomon, in the tenth century before the Christian era. It was therefore incumbent on me, unless I would adopt Sir Isaac Newton's shorter chronology, to remove a formidable objection; and my solution, for a youth of fifteen, is not devoid of ingenuity. In his version of the Sacred Books, Manetho the high priest has identified Sethosis, or Sesostris, with the elder brother of Danaus, who landed in Greece, according to the Parian Marble, fifteen hundred and ten years before Christ. But in my supposition the high priest is guilty of a voluntary error; flattery is the prolific parent of falsehood. Manetho's History of Egypt is dedicated to Ptolemy Philadelphus, who derived a fabulous or illegitimate pedigree from the Macedonian kings of the race of Hercules. Danaus is the ancestor of Hercules; and after the failure of the elder branch, his descendants, the Ptolemies, are the sole representatives of the royal family, and may claim by inheritance the kingdom which they hold by conquest. Such were my juvenile discoveries; at a riper age I no longer presume to connect the Greek, the Jewish, and the Egyptian antiquities, which are lost in a distant cloud. Nor is this the only instance in which the belief and knowledge

of the child are superseded by the more rational ignorance of the man. During my stay at Beriton, my infant-labour was diligently prosecuted, without much interruption from company or country diversions; and I already heard the music of public applause. The discovery of my own weakness was the first symptom of taste. On my return to Oxford, the Age of Sesostris was wisely relinquished; but the imperfect sheets remained twenty years at the bottom of a drawer, till, in a general clearance of papers (Nov., 1772,) they were committed to the flames.

After the departure of Dr. Waldegrave, I was transferred, with his other pupils, to his academical heir, whose literary character did not command the respect of the college. Dr. —— well remembered that he had a salary to receive, and only forgot that he had a duty to perform. Instead of guiding the studies, and watching over the behaviour of his disciple, I was never summoned to attend even the ceremony of a lecture; and, excepting one voluntary visit to his rooms, during the eight months of his titular office, the tutor and pupil lived in the same college as strangers to each other. The want of experience, of advice, and of occupation, soon betrayed me into some improprieties of conduct, ill-chosen company, late hours, and inconsiderate expense. My growing debts might be secret; but my frequent absence was visible and scandalous: and a tour to Bath, a visit into Buckinghamshire, and four excursions to London in the same winter, were costly and dangerous frolics. They were, indeed, without a meaning, as without an excuse. The irksomeness of a cloistered life repeatedly tempted me to wander; but my chief pleasure was that of travelling; and I was too young and bashful to enjoy, like a Manly Oxonian in Town, the pleasures of London. In all these excursions I eloped from Oxford; I returned to college; in a few days I eloped again, as if I had been an independent stranger in a hired lodging, without once hearing the voice of admonition, without once feeling the hand of controul. Yet my time was lost, my expenses were multiplied, my behaviour abroad was unknown; folly as well as vice should have awakened the attention of my

superiors, and my tender years would have justified a more than ordinary degree of restraint and discipline.

It might at least be expected that an ecclesiastical school should inculcate the orthodox principles of religion. But our venerable mother had contrived to unite the opposite extremes of bigotry and indifference: an heretic, or unbeliever, was a monster in her eyes; but she was always, or often, or sometimes, remiss in the spiritual education of her own children. According to the statutes of the university, every student, before he is matriculated, must subscribe his assent to the thirty-nine articles of the church of England, which are signed by more than read, and read by more than believe them. My insufficient age excused me, however, from the immediate performance of this legal ceremony; and the vice-chancellor directed me to return, as soon as I should have accomplished my fifteenth year; recommending me, in the mean while, to the instruction of my college. My college forgot to instruct: I forgot to return, and was myself forgotten by the first magistrate of the university. Without a single lecture, either public or private, either christian or protestant, without any academical subscription, without any episcopal confirmation, I was left by the dim light of my catechism to grope my way to the chapel and communion-table, where I was admitted, without a question, how far, or by what means, I might be qualified to receive the sacrament. Such almost incredible neglect was productive of the worst mischiefs. From my childhood I had been fond of religious disputation: my poor aunt had been often puzzled by the mysteries which she strove to believe; nor had the elastic spring been totally broken by the weight of the atmosphere of Oxford. The blind activity of idleness urged me to advance without armour into the dangerous mazes of controversy; and at the age of sixteen, I bewildered myself in the errors of the church of Rome.[5]

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[5] Gibbon's account of the progress of his conversion is omitted.

After carrying me to Putney, to the house of his friend Mr. Mallet,[6] by whose philosophy I was rather scandalized than reclaimed, it was necessary for my father to form a new plan of education, and to devise some method which, if possible, might effect the cure of my spiritual malady. After much debate it was determined, from the advice and personal experience of Mr. Eliot (now Lord Eliot) to fix me, during some years, at Lausanne in Switzerland. Mr. Frey, a Swiss gentleman of Basil, undertook the conduct of the journey: we left London the 19th of June, crossed the sea from Dover to Calais, travelled post through several provinces of France, by the direct road of St. Quentin, Rheims, Langres, and Besançon, and arrived the 30th of June at Lausanne, where I was immediately settled under the roof and tuition of Mr. Pavilliard, a Calvinist minister.

The first marks of my father's displeasure rather astonished than afflicted me: when he threatened to banish, and disown, and disinherit a rebellious son, I cherished a secret hope that he would not be able or willing to effect his menaces; and the pride of conscience encouraged me to sustain the honourable and important part which I was now acting. My spirits were raised and kept alive by the rapid motion of my journey, the new and various scenes of the Continent, and the civility of Mr. Frey, a man of sense, who was not ignorant of books or the world. But after he had resigned me into Pavilliard's hands, and I was fixed in my new habitation, I had leisure to contemplate the strange and melancholy prospect before me. My first complaint arose from my ignorance of the language. In my childhood I had once studied the French grammar, and I could imperfectly understand the easy prose of a familiar subject. But when I was thus suddenly cast on a foreign land, I found myself deprived of the use of speech and of hearing; and, during some weeks, incapable not only of enjoying the pleasures of conversation, but even of asking or answering

[6] The author of a life of Bacon, which has been rated above its value; of some forgotten poems and plays; and of the pathetic ballad of William and Margaret. — GIBBON'S Note.

a question in the common intercourse of life. To a home-bred Englishman every object, every custom was offensive; but the native of any country might have been disgusted with the general aspect of his lodging and entertainment. I had now exchanged my elegant apartment in Magdalen College, for a narrow, gloomy street, the most unfrequented of an unhandsome town, for an old inconvenient house, and for a small chamber ill-contrived and ill-furnished, which, on the approach of Winter, instead of a companionable fire, must be warmed by the dull invisible heat of a stove. From a man I was again degraded to the dependence of a schoolboy. Mr. Pavilliard managed my expenses, which had been reduced to a diminutive state: I received a small monthly allowance for my pocket-money; and helpless and awkward as I have ever been, I no longer enjoyed the indispensable comfort of a servant. My condition seemed as destitute of hope, as it was devoid of pleasure: I was separated for an indefinite, which appeared an infinite, term from my native country; and I had lost all connexion with my catholic friends. I have since reflected with surprise, that, as the Romish clergy of every part of Europe maintain a close correspondence with each other, they never attempted, by letters or messages, to rescue me from the hands of the heretics, or at least to confirm my zeal and constancy in the profession of the faith. Such was my first introduction to Lausanne; a place where I spent nearly five years with pleasure and profit, which I afterwards revisited without compulsion, and which I have finally selected as the most grateful retreat for the decline of my life.

But it is the peculiar felicity of youth that the most unpleasing objects and events seldom make a deep or lasting impression; it forgets the past, enjoys the present, and anticipates the future. At the flexible age of sixteen I soon learned to endure, and gradually to adopt, the new forms of arbitrary manners: the real hardships of my situation were alienated by time. Had I been sent abroad in a more splendid style, such as the fortune and bounty of my father might have supplied, I might have returned home with the

same stock of language and science, which our countrymen usually import from the Continent. An exile and a prisoner as I was, their example betrayed me into some irregularities of wine, of play, and of idle excursions: but I soon felt the impossibility of associating with them on equal terms; and after the departure of my first acquaintance, I held a cold and civil correspondence with their successors. This seclusion from English society was attended with the most solid benefits. In the *Pays de Vaud*, the French language is used with less imperfection than in most of the distant provinces of France: in Pavilliard's family, necessity compelled me to listen and to speak; and if I was at first disheartened by the apparent slowness, in a few months I was astonished by the rapidity of my progress. My pronunciation was formed by the constant repetition of the same sounds; the variety of words and idioms, the rules of grammar, and distinctions of genders, were impressed in my memory: ease and freedom were obtained by practice; correctness and elegance by labour; and before I was recalled home, French, in which I spontaneously thought, was more familiar than English to my ear, my tongue, and my pen. The first effect of this opening knowledge was the revival of my love of reading, which had been chilled at Oxford; and I soon turned over, without much choice, almost all the French books in my tutor's library. Even these amusements were productive of real advantage: my taste and judgment were now somewhat riper. I was introduced to a new mode of style and literature: by the comparison of manners and opinions, my views were enlarged, my prejudices were corrected, and a copious voluntary abstract of the *Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire*, by le Sueur, may be placed in a middle line between my childish and my manly studies. As soon as I was able to converse with the natives, I began to feel some satisfaction in their company: my awkward timidity was polished and emboldened; and I frequented, for the first time, assemblies of men and women. The acquaintance of the Pavilliards prepared me by degrees for more elegant society. I was received with kindness and indulgence in

the best families of Lausanne; and it was in one of these that I formed an intimate and lasting connection with Mr. Deyverdun, a young man of an amiable temper and excellent understanding. In the arts of fencing and dancing, small indeed was my proficiency; and some months were idly wasted in the riding-school. My unfitness to bodily exercise reconciled me to a sedentary life, and the horse, the favourite of my countrymen, never contributed to the pleasures of my youth.

My obligations to the lessons of Mr. Pavilliard, gratitude will not suffer me to forget: he was endowed with a clear head and a warm heart; his innate benevolence had assuaged the spirit of the church; he was rational, because he was moderate: in the course of his studies he had acquired a just though superficial knowledge of most branches of literature; by long practice, he was skilled in the arts of teaching; and he laboured with assiduous patience to know the character, gain the affection, and open the mind of his English pupil. As soon as we began to understand each other, he gently led me, from a blind and undistinguishing love of reading, into the path of instruction. I consented with pleasure that a portion of the morning hours should be consecrated to a plan of modern history and geography, and to the critical perusal of the French and Latin classics; and at each step I felt myself invigorated by the habits of application and method. His prudence repressed and dissembled some youthful sallies; and as soon as I was confirmed in the habits of industry and temperance, he gave the reins into my own hands. His favourable report of my behaviour and progress gradually obtained some latitude of action and expense; and he wished to alleviate the hardships of my lodging and entertainment. The principles of philosophy were associated with the examples of taste; and by a singular chance, the book, as well as the man, which contributed the most effectually to my education, has a stronger claim on my gratitude than on my admiration. Mr. De Crousaz, the adversary of Bayle and Pope, is not distinguished by lively fancy or profound reflection; and even in his own country, at the end of a few years, his

name and writings are almost obliterated. But his philosophy had been formed in the school of Locke, his divinity in that of Limborch and Le Clerc; in a long and laborious life, several generations of pupils were taught to think, and even to write; his lessons rescued the academy of Lausanne from Calvinistic prejudice; and he had the rare merit of diffusing a more liberal spirit among the clergy and people of the Pays de Vaud. His system of logic, which in the last editions has swelled to six tedious and prolix volumes, may be praised as a clear and methodical abridgment of the art of reasoning, from our simple ideas to the most complex operations of the human understanding. This system I studied, and meditated, and abstracted, till I have obtained the free command of an universal instrument, which I soon presumed to exercise on my catholic opinions. Pavilliard was not unmindful that his first task, his most important duty, was to reclaim me from the errors of popery. The intermixture of sects has rendered the Swiss clergy acute and learned on the topics of controversy; and I have some of his letters in which he celebrates the dexterity of his attack, and my gradual concessions after a firm and well-managed defence.[7] I was willing, and I am now willing, to allow him a handsome share of the honour of my conversion: yet I must observe, that it was principally effected by my private reflections; and I still remember my solitary transport at the discovery of a philosophical argument against the doctrine of transubstantiation: *that* the text of scripture, which seems to inculcate the real presence, is attested only by a single sense — our sight; while the real presence itself is disproved by three of our senses — the sight, the touch, and the taste. The various articles of the Romish creed disappeared like a dream; and after a full convic-

[7] M. Pavilliard has described to me the astonishment with which he gazed on Mr. Gibbon standing before him, — a thin little figure, with a large head, disputing and urging, with the greatest ability, all the best arguments that had ever been used in favour of popery. Mr. Gibbon many years ago became very fat and corpulent, but he had uncommonly small bones, and was very slight made. — SHEFFIELD'S Note.

tion, on Christmas-day, 1754, I received the sacrament in the church of Lausanne. It was here that I suspended my religious inquiries, acquiescing with implicit belief in the tenets and mysteries, which are adopted by the general consent of catholics and protestants.

Such, from my arrival at Lausanne, during the first eighteen or twenty months (July 1753–March 1755), were my useful studies, the foundation of all my future improvements. But every man who rises above the common level has received two educations: the first from his teachers; the second, more personal and important, from himself. He will not, like the fanatics of the last age, define the moment of grace; but he cannot forget the æra of his life, in which his mind has expanded to its proper form and dimensions. My worthy tutor had the good sense and modesty to discern how far he could be useful: as soon as he felt that I advanced beyond his speed and measure, he wisely left me to my genius; and the hours of lesson were soon lost in the voluntary labour of the whole morning, and sometimes of the whole day. The desire of prolonging my time, gradually confirmed the salutary habit of early rising, to which I have always adhered, with some regard to seasons and situations; but it is happy for my eyes and my health, that my temperate ardour has never been seduced to trespass on the hours of the night. During the last three years of my residence at Lausanne, I may assume the merit of serious and solid application; but I am tempted to distinguish the last eight months of the year 1755, as the period of the most extraordinary diligence and rapid progress.[8] In my French

[8] JOURNAL, December, 1755.] — In finishing this year, I must remark how favourable it was to my studies. In the space of eight months, from the beginning of April, I learnt the principles of drawing; made myself complete master of the French and Latin languages, with which I was very superficially acquainted before, and wrote and translated a great deal in both; read Cicero's Epistles ad Familiares, his Brutus, all his Orations, his Dialogues de Amicitiâ, and De Senectute; Terence, twice; and Pliny's Epistles; in French, Giannone's History of Naples, and l'Abbé Bannier's Mythology, and M. de Boehat's Memoirs sur la Suisse, and wrote a very ample relation of my

and Latin translations I adopted an excellent method, which, from my own success, I would recommend to the imitation of students. I chose some classic writer, such as Cicero and Vertot, the most approved for purity and elegance of style. I translated, for instance, an epistle of Cicero into French; and after throwing it aside, till the words and phrases were obliterated from my memory, I re-translated my French into such Latin as I could find; and then compared each sentence of my imperfect version, with the ease, the grace, the propriety of the Roman orator. A similar experiment was made on several pages of the Revolutions of Vertot; I turned them into Latin, returned them after a sufficient interval into my own French, and again scrutinized the resemblance or dissimilitude of the copy and the original. By degrees I was less ashamed, by degrees I was more satisfied with myself; and I persevered in the practice of these double translations, which filled several books, till I had acquired the knowledge of both idioms, and the command at least of a correct style. This useful exercise of writing was accompanied and succeeded by the more pleasing occupation of reading the best authors. The perusal of the Roman classics was at once my exercise and reward. Dr. Middleton's History, which I then appreciated above its true value, naturally directed me to the writings of Cicero. The most perfect editions, that of Olivet, which may adorn the shelves of the rich, that of Ernesti, which should lie on the table of the learned, were not in my power. For the familiar epistles I used the text and English commentary of Bishop Ross: but my general edition was that of Verburgius, published at Amsterdam in two large volumes in folio, with an indifferent choice of various notes. I read, with application and pleasure, *all* the epistles, *all* the orations, and the most important treatises of rhetoric and philosophy;

tour. I likewise began to study Greek, and went through the Grammar. I begun to make very large collections of what I read. But what I esteem most of all, from the perusal and meditation of De Crousaz's Logic, I not only understood the principles of that science, but formed my mind to a habit of thinking and reasoning I had no idea of before.

and as I read, I applauded the observation of Quintilian, that every student may judge of his own proficiency by the satisfaction which he receives from the Roman orator. I tasted the beauties of language, I breathed the spirit of freedom, and I imbibed from his precepts and examples the public and private sense of a man. Cicero in Latin, and Xenophon in Greek, are indeed the two ancients whom I would first propose to a liberal scholar; not only for the merit of their style and sentiments, but for the admirable lessons, which may be applied almost to every situation of public and private life. Cicero's Epistles may in particular afford the models of every form of correspondence, from the careless effusions of tenderness and friendship, to the well-guarded declaration of discreet and dignified resentment. After finishing this great author, a library of eloquence and reason, I formed a more extensive plan of reviewing the Latin classics,[9] under the four divisions of, 1. historians, 2. poets, 3. orators, and 4. philosophers, in a chronological series, from the days of Plautus and Sallust, to the decline of the language and empire of Rome: and this plan, in the last twenty-seven months of my residence at Lausanne (Jan. 1756–April 1758), I *nearly* accomplished. Nor was this review, however rapid, either hasty or superficial. I indulged myself in a second and even a third perusal of Terence, Virgil, Horace, Tacitus, &c., and studied to imbibe the sense and spirit most congenial to my own. I never suffered a difficult or corrupt passage to escape, till I had viewed it in every light of which it was susceptible: though often disappointed, I always consulted the most learned or ingenious commentators, Torrentius and Dacier on Horace, Catrou and Servius on Virgil, Lipsius on Tacitus, Meziriac on Ovid, &c.; and in the ardour of my inquiries, I embraced a large circle of historical and critical erudition. My abstracts of each book were made in the French language: my observations

[9] JOURNAL, Jan. 1756. — I determined to read over the Latin authors in order; and read this year, Virgil, Sallust, Livy, Velleius Paterculus, Valerius Maximus, Tacitus, Suetonius, Quintus Curtius, Justin, Florus, Plautus, Terence, and Lucretius. I also read and meditated Locke upon the Understanding.

often branched into particular essays; and I can still read, without contempt, a dissertation of eight folio pages on eight lines (287–294) of the fourth Georgic of Virgil. Mr. Deyverdun, my friend, whose name will be frequently repeated, had joined with equal zeal, though not with equal perseverance, in the same undertaking. To him every thought, every composition, was instantly communicated; with him I enjoyed the benefits of a free conversation on the topics of our common studies.

But it is scarcely possible for a mind endowed with any active curiosity to be long conversant with the Latin classics, without aspiring to know the Greek originals, whom they celebrate as their masters, and of whom they so warmly recommend the study and imitation:

> . . . *Vos exemplaria Græca*
> *Nocturnâ versate manu, versate diurnâ.*[10]

It was now that I regretted the early years which had been wasted in sickness or idleness, or mere idle reading; that I condemned the perverse method of our schoolmasters, who, by first teaching the mother-language, might descend with so much ease and perspicuity to the origin and etymology of a derivative idiom. In the nineteenth year of my age I determined to supply this defect; and the lessons of Pavilliard again contributed to smooth the entrance of the way, the Greek alphabet, the grammar, and the pronunciation according to the French accent. At my earnest request we presumed to open the Iliad; and I had the pleasure of beholding, though darkly and through a glass, the true image of Homer, whom I had long since admired in an English dress. After my tutor had left me to myself, I worked my way through about half the Iliad, and afterwards interpreted alone a large portion of Xenophon and Herodotus. But my ardour, destitute of aid and emulation, was gradually cooled, and, from the barren task of searching words in a lexicon, I withdrew to the free and familiar

[10] *Study the Greek models by night and by day.* — HORACE, *Ars Poetica*, 208–9.

conversation of Virgil and Tacitus. Yet in my residence at Lausanne I had laid a solid foundation, which enabled me, in a more propitious season, to prosecute the study of Grecian literature.

From a blind idea of the usefulness of such abstract science, my father had been desirous, and even pressing, that I should devote some time to the mathematics; nor could I refuse to comply with so reasonable a wish. During two winters I attended the private lectures of Monsieur de Traytorrens, who explained the elements of algebra and geometry, as far as the conic sections of the Marquis de l'Hôpital, and appeared satisfied with my diligence and improvement.[11] But as my childish propensity for numbers and calculations was totally extinct, I was content to receive the passive impression of my Professor's lectures, without any active exercise of my own powers. As soon as I understood the principles, I relinquished for ever the pursuit of the mathematics; nor can I lament that I desisted, before my mind was hardened by the habit of rigid demonstration, so destructive of the finer feelings of moral evidence, which must, however, determine the actions and opinions of our lives. I listened with more pleasure to the proposal of studying the law of nature and nations, which was taught in the academy of Lausanne by Mr. Vicat, a professor of some learning and reputation. But instead of attending his public or private course, I preferred in my closet the lessons of his masters, and my

[11] JOURNAL, January, 1757. — I began to study algebra under M. de Traytorrens, went through the elements of algebra and geometry, and the three first books of the Marquis de l'Hôpital's Conic Sections. I also read Tibullus, Catullus, Propertius, Horace, (with Dacier's and Torrentius's Notes,) Virgil, Ovid's Epistles, with Meziriac's Commentary, the Ars Amandi, and the Elegies; likewise the Augustus and Tiberius of Suetonius, and a Latin translation of Dion Cassius, from the death of Julius Cæsar to the death of Augustus. I also continued my correspondence begun last year with M. Allemand of Bex, and the Professor Breitinger of Zurich; and opened a new one with the Professor Gesner of Göttingen.

N. B. Last year and this, I read St. John's Gospel, with part of Xenophon's Cyropædia; the Iliad, and Herodotus; but upon the whole, I rather neglected my Greek.

own reason. Without being disgusted by Grotius or Puffendorf, I studied in their writings the duties of a man, the rights of a citizen, the theory of justice (it is, alas! a theory), and the laws of peace and war, which have had some influence on the practice of modern Europe. My fatigues were alleviated by the good sense of their commentator Barbeyrac. Locke's Treatise of Government instructed me in the knowledge of Whig principles, which are rather founded in reason than experience; but my delight was in the frequent perusal of Montesquieu, whose energy of style, and boldness of hypothesis, were powerful to awaken and stimulate the genius of the age. The logic of De Crousaz had prepared me to engage with his master Locke and his antagonist Bayle; of whom the former may be used as a bridle, and the latter applied as a spur, to the curiosity of a young philosopher. According to the nature of their respective works, the schools of argument and objection, I carefully went through the Essay on Human Understanding, and occasionally consulted the most interesting articles of the Philosophic Dictionary. In the infancy of my reason I turned over, as an idle amusement, the most serious and important treatise: in its maturity, the most trifling performance could exercise my taste or judgment, and more than once I have been led by a novel into a deep and instructive train of thinking. But I cannot forbear to mention three particular books, since they may have remotely contributed to form the historian of the Roman empire. 1. From the Provincial Letters of Pascal, which almost every year I have perused with new pleasure, I learned to manage the weapon of grave and temperate irony, even on subjects of ecclesiastical solemnity. 2. The Life of Julian, by the Abbé de la Bleterie, first introduced me to the man and the times; and I should be glad to recover my first essay on the truth of the miracle which stopped the rebuilding of the Temple of Jerusalem. 3. In Giannone's Civil History of Naples I observed with a critical eye the progress and abuse of sacerdotal power, and the revolutions of Italy in the darker ages. This various reading, which I now conducted with discretion, was digested, according to the precept and model of

Mr. Locke, into a large common-place book; a practice, however, which I do not strenuously recommend. The action of the pen will doubtless imprint an idea on the mind as well as on the paper: but I much question whether the benefits of this laborious method are adequate to the waste of time; and I must agree with Dr. Johnson, (Idler, No. 74.) "that what is twice read, is commonly better remembered, than what is transcribed."

XXIV.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

(1771-1832.)

ESSAY ON THE DRAMA.

[Written before 1819.]

The Drama of England commenced, as we have already observed, upon the Spanish model. *Ferrex and Porrex* was the first composition approaching to a regular tragedy; and it was acted before Queen Elizabeth upon the 18th of January, 1561, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple. It partakes rather of the character of a historical than of a classical Drama, although more nearly allied to the latter class than the chronicle plays which afterwards took possession of the stage. We have already recorded Sir Philip Sidney's commendation of this play, which he calls by the name of *Gorboduc* from one of the principal characters.[1] Acted by a learned body, and written in great part by Lord Sackville, the principal author of the *Mirror for Magistrates*, the first of English tragedies assumed in some degree the honours of the learned buskin; but although a Chorus was presented according to the classical model, the play was free from the observance of the unities; and contains many irregularities severely condemned by the regular critics.

English comedy, considered as a regular composition, is said to

[1] Gorboduc was the father of Ferrex and Porrex, between whom he divided his kingdom, and the plot details the wars consequent thereupon. It is taken from Geoffrey of Monmouth's History of the Britons. See *ante*, p. 39.

have commenced with *Gammer Gurton's Needle*.[2] This "right pithy, pleasant, and merry comedy," was the supposed composition of John Still, Master of Arts, and afterwards Bishop of Bath and Wells. It was acted in Christ Church College, Cambridge, 1575. It is a piece of low humour, the whole jest turning upon the loss and recovery of the needle with which Gammer Gurton was to repair the breeches of her man Hodge; but, in point of manners, it is a great curiosity, as the *curta suppellex*[3] of our ancestors is scarcely anywhere so well described. The popular characters also, the Sturdy Beggar, the Clown, the Country Vicar, and the Shrew, of the sixteenth century, are drawn in colours taken from the life. The unities of time, place, and action, are observed through the play with an accuracy of which France might be jealous. The time is a few hours — the place, the open square of the village before Gammer Gurton's door — the action, the loss of the needle — and this, followed by the search for and final recovery of that necessary implement, is intermixed with no other thwarting or subordinate interest, but is progressive from the commencement to the conclusion.

It is remarkable that the earliest English tragedy and comedy are both works of considerable merit; that each partakes of the distinct character of its class; that the tragedy is without intermixture of comedy; the comedy, without any intermixture of tragedy.

These models were followed by a variety of others, in which no such distinctions were observed. Numerous theatres sprung up in different parts of the metropolis, opened upon speculation by distinct troops of performers. Their number shows how much they interested public curiosity; for men never struggle for a share in a losing profession. They acted under licenses, which appear to have been granted for the purpose of police alone, not of exclusive privilege or monopoly; since London contained, in the latter

[2] In 1820 it was ascertained by Collier that Udall's comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, was earlier than *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. See Collier's History of English Dramatic Poetry, Vol. II., pp. 444 ff., ed. 1831.

[3] *small furniture*. Used metaphorically in PERSIUS, *Satires*, IV. 52.

part of the sixteenth century, no fewer than fourteen distinct companies of players, with very considerable privileges and remunerations. See Drake's *Shakspeare and his Times*, vol. ii, p. 205.

The public, therefore, in the widest sense of the word, was at once arbiter and patron of the Drama. The companies of players who traversed the country, might indeed assume the name of some peer or baron, for the sake of introduction or protection; but those of the metropolis do not, at this early period of our dramatic history, appear to have rested in any considerable degree upon learned or aristocratic privilege. The license was obtained from the crown, but their success depended upon the voice of the people; and the pieces which they brought forward were, of course, adapted to popular taste. It followed necessarily that histories and romantic Dramas were the favourites of the period. A general audience in an unlearned age requires rather amusement than conformity to rules, and is more displeased with a tiresome uniformity than shocked with the breach of all the unities. The players and dramatists, before the rise of Shakspeare, followed, of consequence, the taste of the public; and dealt in the surprising, elevating, and often bombastic incidents of tragedy, as well as in the low humours and grotesque situations of the comic scene. Where these singly were found to lack attraction, they mingled them together, and dashed their tragic plot with an under-intrigue of the lowest buffoonery, without any respect to taste or congruity.

The clown was no stranger to the stage; he interfered, without ceremony, in the most heart-rending scenes, to the scandal of the more learned spectators.

> "Now lest such frightful shows of fortune's fall
> And bloody tyrant's rage should chance appall
> The death-struck audience, 'midst the silent rout,
> Comes leaping in a self-misformed lout,
> And laughs and grins, and frames his mimic face,
> And jostles straight into the prince's place;
> Then doth the theatre echo all aloud,
> With gladsome noise of that applauding crowd,
> A goodly hotchpotch, where vile russettings
> Are matched with monarchs and with mighty kings."

An ancient stage-trick, illustrative of the mixture of tragic and comic action in Shakspeare's time, was long preserved in the theatre. Henry IV., holding council before the battle of Shrewsbury, was always represented as seated on a drum; and when he rose and came forward to address his nobles, the place was occupied by Falstaff; a practical jest which seldom failed to produce a laugh from the galleries. The taste and judgment of the author himself were very different. During the whole scene, Falstaff gives only once, and under irresistible temptation, the rein to his petulant wit, and it is instantly checked by the prince; to whom, by the way, and not to the king, his words ought to be addressed.

The English stage might be considered equally without rule and without model when Shakspeare arose. The effect of the genius of an individual upon the taste of a nation is mighty; but that genius, in its turn, is formed according to the opinions prevalent at the period when it comes into existence. Such was the case with Shakspeare. Had he received an education more extensive, and possessed a taste refined by the classical models, it is probable that he also, in admiration of the ancient Drama, might have mistaken the form for the essence, and subscribed to those rules which had produced such masterpieces of art. Fortunately for the full exertion of a genius, as comprehensive and versatile as intense and powerful, Shakspeare had no access to any models of which the commanding merit might have controlled and limited his own exertions. He followed the path which a nameless crowd of obscure writers had trodden before him; but he moved in it with the grace and majestic step of a being of a superior order; and vindicated for ever the British theatre from a pedantic restriction to classical rule. Nothing went before Shakspeare which in any respect was fit to fix and stamp the character of a national Drama; and certainly no one will succeed him capable of establishing, by mere authority, a form more restricted than that which Shakspeare used.

Such is the action of existing circumstances upon genius and the re-action of genius upon future circumstances. Shakspeare

and Corneille was each the leading spirit of his age; and the difference between them is well marked by the editor of the latter: — "*Corneille est inégal comme Shakespeare, et plein de génie comme lui; mais le génie de Corneille étoit à celui de Shakespeare ce qu'un* seigneur *est à l'égard d'un* homme de peuple *né avec le même esprit que lui.*" [4] This distinction is strictly accurate, and contains a compliment to the English author which, assuredly, the critic did not intend to make. Corneille wrote as a courtier, circumscribed within the imaginary rules and ceremonies of a court, as a chicken is by a circle of chalk drawn round it. Shakspeare, composing for the amusement of the public alone, had within his province not only the inexhaustible field of actual life, but the whole ideal world of fancy and superstition; more favourable to the display of poetical genius than even existing realities. Under the circumstances of Corneille, Shakspeare must have been restricted to the same dull, regular, and unvaried system. He must have written, not according to the dictates of his own genius, but in conformity to the mandate of some *Intendant des menus plaisirs*;[5] or of some minister of state, who, like Cardinal Richelieu, thought he could write a tragedy because he could govern a kingdom. It is not equally clear to what height Corneille might have ascended, had he enjoyed the national immunities of Shakspeare. Each pitched down a land-mark in his art. The circle of Shakspeare was so extensive, that it is with advantage liable to many restrictions; that of Corneille included a narrow limit, which his successors have deemed it unlawful to enlarge.

It is not our intention, within the narrow space to which our essay is necessarily limited, to enlarge upon the character and writings of Shakspeare. We can only notice his performances as events in the history of the theatre — of a gigantic character, indeed, so far as its dignity, elevation, and importance are consid-

[4] *Corneille is unequal like Shakespeare, and full of genius like him; but the genius of Corneille was to that of Shakespeare what a lord is in respect to a man of the people, born with the same wit as he.*

[5] *Director of minor entertainments.*

ered ; but, in respect of the mere practice of the Drama, rather fixing and sanctioning, than altering or reforming, those rules and forms which he found already established. This we know for certain, that those historical plays or chronicles, in which Shakspeare's muse has thrown a never-fading light upon the history of his country, did, almost every one of them, exist before him in the rude shapes of dry dialogue and pitiful buffoonery, stitched into scenes by the elder play-wrights of the stage. His romantic Dramas exhibit the same contempt of regularity which was manifested by Marlow, and other writers ; for where there was abuse or extreme license upon the stage, the example of Shakspeare may be often quoted as its sanction, never as tending to reform it. In these particulars the practice of our immortal bard was contrasted with that of Ben Jonson, a severe and somewhat pedantic scholar — a man whose mind was coarse, though possessing both strength and elevation, and whose acute perception of comic humours was tinctured with vulgarity.

Jonson's tragic strength consists in a sublime, and sometimes harsh, expression of moral sentiment ; but displays little of tumultuous and ardent passion, still less of tenderness or delicacy, although there are passages in which he seems adequate to expressing them. He laboured in the mine of the classics, but over-loaded himself with the ore, which he could not, or would not, refine. His *Cataline* and *Sejanus* are laboured translations from Cicero, Sallust, and Tacitus, which his own age did not endure, and which no succeeding generation will be probably much tempted to revive. With the stern superiority of learning over ignorance, he asserted himself a better judge of his own productions, than the public which condemned him, and haughtily claimed the laurel which the general suffrage often withheld, but the world has as yet shown no disposition to reverse the opinion of their predecessors.

In comedy, Jonson made some efforts partaking of the character of the older comedy of the Grecians. In his *Tale of a Tub* he follows the path of Aristophanes and lets his wit run into low

buffoonery, that he might bring upon the stage Inigo Jones, his personal enemy. In *Cynthia's Revells*, and *The Staple of News*, we find him introducing the dull personification of abstract passions and qualities, and turning legitimate comedy into an allegorical mask. What interest can the reader have in such characters as the three Penny boys, and their transactions with the Lady Pecunia?

Some of Jonson's more legitimate comedies may be also taxed here with filthiness of language; of which disgusting attribute his works exhibit more instances than those of any English writer of eminence, excepting Swift. Let us, however, be just to a master-spirit of his age. The comic force of Jonson was strong, marked, and peculiar; and he excelled even Shakspeare himself in drawing that class of truly English characters, remarkable for peculiarity of *humour* — that is, for some mode of thought, speech, and behaviour, superinduced upon the natural disposition, by profession, education, or fantastical affectation of singularity. In blazoning these forth with their natural attributes and appropriate language, Ben Jonson has never been excelled; and his works everywhere exhibit a consistent and manly moral, resulting naturally from the events of the scene.

It must also be remembered, that, although it was Jonson's fate to be eclipsed by the superior genius, energy, and taste of Shakspeare, yet those advantages which enabled him to maintain an honourable though an unsuccessful struggle, were of high advantage to the Drama. Jonson was the first who showed, by example, the infinite superiority of a well-conceived plot, all the parts of which bore upon each other, and forwarded an interesting conclusion, over a tissue of detached scenes, following without necessary connexion or increase of interest. The plot of *The Fox* is admirably conceived; and that of *The Alchymist*, though faulty in the conclusion, is nearly equal to it. In the two comedies of *Every Man in his Humour*, and *Every Man out of his Humour*, the plot deserves much less praise, and is deficient at once in interest and unity of action; but in that of *The Silent Woman*, nothing can

exceed the art with which the circumstance upon which the conclusion turns, is, until the very last scene, concealed from the knowledge of the reader, while he is tempted to suppose it constantly within his reach. In a word, Jonson is distinguished by his strength and stature, even in those days when there were giants in the land; and affords a model of a close, animated, and characteristic style of comedy, abounding in moral satire, and distinguished at once by force and art, which was afterwards more cultivated by English dramatists, than the lighter, more wild, and more fanciful department in which Shakspeare moved, beyond the reach of emulation.

The general opinion of critics has assigned genius as the characteristic of Shakspeare, and art as the appropriate excellence of Jonson; not, surely, that Jonson was deficient in genius, but that art was the principal characteristic of his laborious scenes. We learn from his own confession and from the panegyrics of his friends, as well as the taunts of his enemies, that he was a slow composer. The natural result of laborious care is jealousy of fame; for that which we do with labour, we value highly when achieved. Shakspeare, on the other hand, appears to have composed rapidly and carelessly; and, sometimes, even without considering, while writing the earlier acts, how the catastrophe was to be huddled up in that which was to conclude the piece. We may fairly conclude him to have been indifferent about fame, who would take so little pains to win it. Much, perhaps, might have been achieved by the union of these opposed qualities, and by blending the art of Jonson with the fiery invention and fluent expression of his great contemporary. But such a union of opposite excellences in the same author was hardly to be expected; nor, perhaps, would the result have proved altogether so favourable as might at first view be conceived. We should have had more perfect specimens of the art; but they must have been much fewer in number; and posterity would certainly have been deprived of that rich luxuriance of dramatic excellences and poetic beauties, which, like wild flowers upon a common field, lie scattered profusely among the unacted plays of Shakspeare.

Although incalculably superior to his contemporaries, Shakspeare had successful imitators, and the art of Jonson was not unrivalled. Massinger appears to have studied the works of both, with the intention of uniting their excellences. He knew the strength of plot; and although his plays are altogether irregular, yet he well understood the advantage of a strong and defined interest; and in unravelling the intricacy of his intrigues, he often displays the management of a master. Art, therefore, not perhaps in its technical, but in its most valuable sense, was Massinger's as well as Jonson's; and, in point of composition, many passages of his plays are not unworthy of Shakspeare. Were we to distinguish Massinger's peculiar excellence, we should name that first of dramatic attributes, a full conception of character, a strength in bringing out, and consistency in adhering to it. He does not, indeed, always introduce his personages to the audience, in their own proper character; it dawns forth gradually in the progress of the piece, as in the hypocritical Luke, or in the heroic Marullo. But, upon looking back, we are always surprised and delighted to trace from the very beginning, intimations of what the personage is to prove, as the play advances. There is often a harshness of outline, however, in the characters of this dramatist, which prevents their approaching to the natural and easy portraits bequeathed us by Shakspeare.

Beaumont and Fletcher, men of remarkable talent, seemed to have followed Shakspeare's mode of composition, rather than Jonson's, and thus to have altogether neglected that art which Jonson taught, and which Massinger in some sort practised. They may, indeed, be rather said to have taken for their model the boundless license of the Spanish stage, from which many of their pieces are expressly and avowedly derived. The acts of their plays are so detached from each other, in substance and consistency, that the plot scarce can be said to hang together at all, or to have, in any sense of the word, a beginning, progress, and conclusion. It seems as if the play began, because the curtain rose, and ended because it fell; the author, in the meantime, exerting

his genius for the amusement of the spectators, pretty much in the same manner as in the *Scenario* of the Italians, by the actors filling up, with their extempore wit, the scenes chalked out for them. To compensate for this excess of irregularity, the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher have still a high poetical value. If character be sometimes violated, probability discarded, and the interest of the plot neglected, the reader is, on the other hand, often gratified by the most beautiful description, the most tender and passionate dialogue ; a display of brilliant wit and gaiety, or a feast of comic humour. These attributes had so much effect on the public that, during the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries, many of Beaumont and Fletcher's plays had possession of the stage, while those of Shakspeare were laid upon the shelf.

Shirley, Ford, Webster, Decker, and others added performances to the early treasures of the English Drama, which abound with valuable passages. There never, probably, rushed into the lists of literary composition together, a band more distinguished for talent. If the early Drama be inartificial and unequal, no nation, at least, can show so many detached scenes, and even acts, of high poetical merit. One powerful cause seems to have produced an effect so marked and distinguished ; to wit, the universal favour of a theatrical public, which daily and nightly thronged the numerous theatres then open in the city of London.

In considering this circumstance, it must above all be remembered that these numerous audiences crowded, not to feast their eyes upon show and scenery, but to see and hear the literary production of the evening. The scenes which the stage exhibited, were probably of the most paltry description. Some rude helps to the imagination of the audience might be used by introducing the gate of a castle or town, the monument of the Capulets, by sinking a trap-door, or by thrusting in a bed. The good-natured audience readily received these hints with that conventional allowance which Sir Philip Sidney had ridiculed, [6] and which Shakspeare himself has alluded to, when he appeals from the poverty of

[6] See *ante*, pp. 39, 40.

the theatrical representation to the excited imagination of his audience.

——————— "Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? Or may we cram
Within this wooden O, the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?
O, pardon! since a crooked figure may
Attest, in little place, a million;
And let us, ciphers to this great account,
On your imaginary forces work:
Suppose, within the girdle of these walls
Are now confin'd two mighty monarchies,
Whose high upreared and abutting fronts
The perilous, narrow ocean parts asunder;
Think, when we talk of horses, that you see them
Printing their proud hoofs i' the receiving earth.
For 'tis your thoughts that now must deck our kings,
Carry them here and there; jumping o'er times;
Turning the accomplishment of many years
Into an hour-glass." —

Chorus to K. Henry V. [*Prologue*, 11–31.]

Such were the allowances demanded by Shakspeare and his contemporaries from the public of their day, in consideration of the imperfect means and appliances of their theatrical machinery. Yet the deficiency of scenery and show, which, when existing in its utmost splendour, divides the interest of the piece in the mind of the ignorant, and rarely affords much pleasure to a spectator of taste, may have been rather an advantage to the infant Drama. The spectators having nothing to withdraw their attention from the immediate business of the piece, gave it their full and uninterrupted attention. And here it may not be premature to enquire into the characteristical difference between the audiences of the present day and of those earlier theatrical ages, when the Drama boasted not only the names of Shakspeare, of Massinger, of Jonson, of Beaumont and Fletcher, of Shirley, of Ford; but others of subordinate degree, the meanest of whom shows occasionally more fire than warms whole reams of modern plays. This will probably

be found to rest on the varied and contrasted feelings with which the audience of ancient and that of modern days attend the progress of the scene.

Nothing, indeed, is more certain, than that the general cast of theatrical composition must receive its principal bent and colouring from the taste of the audience.

> "The Drama's laws, the Drama's patrons give;
> For those who live to please, must please to live."
>
> JOHNSON'S *Prologue*, 1747.[7]

But though this be an undeniable, and in some respects a melancholy truth, it is not less certain, that genius, labouring in behalf of the public, possesses the power of re-action, and of influencing, in its turn, that taste to which it is in some respects obliged to conform; while, on the other hand, the play-wright, who aims only to catch the passing plaudit and the profit of a season, by addressing himself exclusively to the ruling predilections of the audience, degrades the public taste still farther by the gross food which he ministers to it; unless it shall be supposed that he may contribute involuntarily to rouse it from its degeneracy, by cramming it even to satiety and loathing. This action, therefore, and re-action, of the taste of the age on dramatic writing, and *vice versa*, must both be kept in view, when treating of the difference betwixt the days of Shakspeare and our own.

Perhaps it is the leading distinction betwixt the ancient and modern audiences, that the former came to listen, and to admire; to fling the reins of their imaginations into the hands of the author and actors, and to be pleased, like the reader to whom Sterne longed to do homage, "they knew not why, and cared not wherefore." The novelty of dramatic entertainments (for there elapsed only about twenty years betwixt the date of *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, accounted the earliest English play,[8] and the rise of

[7] Prologue spoken at the opening of the Drury Lane Theatre, 1747. Read *we that* for *those who*.

[8] See Note 2.

Shakspeare) must have had its natural effect upon the audience. The sun of Shakspeare arose almost without a single gleam of intervening twilight; and it was no wonder that the audience, introduced to this enchanting and seductive art at once, under such an effulgence of excellence, should have been more disposed to wonder than to criticise; to admire — or rather to adore — than to measure the height, or ascertain the course, of the luminary which diffused such glory around him. The great number of theatres in London, and the profusion of varied talent which was dedicated to this service, attest the eagerness of the public to enjoy the entertainments of the scene. The ruder amusements of the age lost their attraction; and the royal bear-ward of Queen Elizabeth lodged a formal complaint at the feet of her majesty, that the playhouses had seduced the audience from his periodical bear-baitings! This fact is worth a thousand conjectures; and we can hardly doubt, that the converts, transported by their improving taste from the bear-garden to the theatre, must, generally speaking, have felt their rude minds subdued and led captive by the superior intelligence, which not only placed on the stage at pleasure all ranks, all ages, all tempers, all passions of mere humanity, but extended its powers beyond the bounds of time and space, and seemed to render visible to mortal eyes the secrets of the invisible world. We may, perhaps, form the best guess of the feelings of Shakespeare's contemporary audience, by recollecting the emotions of any rural friend of rough, but sound sense, and ardent feelings, whom we have had the good fortune to conduct to a theatre for the first time in his life. It may be well imagined, that such a spectator thinks little of the three dramatic unities, of which Aristotle says so little, and his commentators and followers talk so much; and that the poet and the performers have that enviable influence over his imagination, which transports him from place to place at pleasure; crowds years into the course of hours, and interests him in the business of each scene, however disconnected from the others. His eyes are riveted to the stage, his ears drink in the accents of the speakers, and he experiences in his mature

age, what we have all felt in childhood — a sort of doubt whether the beings and business of the scene be real or fictitious. In this state of delightful fascination, Shakspeare and the gigantic dramatic champions of his age found the British public at large; and how they availed themselves of the advantages which so favourable a temper afforded them, their works will show so long as the language of Britain continues to be read.[9] It is true that the enthusiastic glow of the public admiration, like the rays of a tropical sun darted upon a rich soil, called up in profusion weeds as well as flowers; and that, spoiled in some degree by the indulgent acceptation which attended their efforts, even our most admired writers of Elizabeth's age not unfrequently exceeded the bounds of critical nicety, and even of common taste and decorum. But these eccentricities were atoned for by a thousand beauties, to which, fettered by the laws of the classic Drama, the authors would hardly have aspired, or aspiring, would hardly have attained. All of us know and feel how much the exercise of our powers, especially those which rest on keen feelings and self-confidence, is dependent upon a favourable reception from those for whom they are put in action. Every one has observed how a cold brow can damp the brilliancy of wit, and fetter the flow of eloquence; and how both are induced to send forth sallies corresponding in strength and fire, upon being received by the kindred enthusiasm of those whom they have addressed. And thus, if we owe to the indiscriminate admiration with which the Drama was at first received, the irregularities of the authors by whom it was practised, we also stand indebted to it, in all probability, for many of its beauties, which became of rare occurrence, when, by a natural, and indeed a necessary change, satiated admiration began to give way to other feelings.

When a child is tired of playing with a new toy, its next delight is to examine how it is constructed; and, in like manner, so soon as the first burst of public admiration is over with respect to any new

[9] See note on the style of the drama, quoted from JEFFREY, in Black's edition of SCOTT's *Miscellaneous Works*, Vol. VI. p. 349.

mode of composition, the next impulse prompts us to analyze and to criticise what was at first the subject of vague and indiscriminate wonder. In the first instance, the toy is generally broken to pieces; in the other, while the imagination of the authors is subjected to the rigid laws of criticism, the public generally lose in genius what they may gain in point of taste. The author who must calculate upon severe criticism, turns his thoughts more to avoid faults than to attain excellence; as he who is afraid to stumble must avoid rapid motion. The same process takes place in all the fine arts: their first productions are distinguished by boldness and irregularity; those which succeed, by a better and more correct taste, but also by inferior and less original genius.

The original school founded by Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, continued by Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher, Shirley, Ford, and others, whose compositions are distinguished by irregularity as well as genius, was closed by the breaking out of the great civil war in 1642. The stage had been the constant object of reprobation and abhorrence on the part of the Puritans, and its professors had no favour to expect at their hands if victorious. We read, therefore, with interest, but without surprise, that almost all the actors took up arms in behalf of their old master King Charles, in whose service most of them perished. Robinson, a principal actor at the Blackfriars, was killed by Harrison in cold blood and under the application of a text of scripture, — "Cursed is he that doeth the work of the Lord negligently."[10] A few survivors endeavoured occasionally to practise their art in secrecy and obscurity, but were so frequently discovered, plundered, and stripped by the soldiers, that "*Enter the redcoat, Exit hat and cloak*," was too frequent a stage direction. Sir William Davenant endeavoured to evade the severe zealots of the time, by representing a sort of opera, said to have been the first Drama in which movable scenery was introduced upon the stage. Even the cavaliers of the more grave sort disapproved of the revival of these festive entertainments during the unstable and melancholy period of the interreg-

[10] Jer. xlviii. 10. Read *deceitfully* for *negligently*.

num. "I went," says the excellent Evelyn, in his *Diary*, 5th May, 1658, "to see a new opera after the Italian way, in recitation, music, and scenes, much inferior to the Italian composure and magnificence; but it was prodigious that in such a time of public consternation, such a variety should be kept up or permitted, and being engaged with company, could not decently resist the going to see it, though my heart smote me for it." Davenant's theatrical enterprise, abhorred by the fanaticism of the one party, and ill adapted to the dejected circumstances of the other, was not probably very successful.

XXV.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

(1772–1834.)

BIOGRAPHIA LITERARIA.

[Written about 1817.]

Chapter XXI. — Remarks on the Present Mode of Conducting Critical Journals.

Long have I wished to see a fair and philosophical inquisition into the character of Wordsworth, as a poet, on the evidence of his published works; and a positive, not a comparative, appreciation of their *characteristic* excellencies, deficiencies, and defects. I know no claim, that the mere *opinion* of any individual can have to weigh down the opinion of the author himself, against the probability of whose parental partiality we ought to set that of his having thought longer and more deeply on the subject. But I should call that investigation fair and philosophical in which the critic announces and endeavours to establish the principles which he holds for the foundation of poetry in general, with the specification of these in their application to the different classes of poetry. Having thus prepared his canons of criticism for praise and condemnation, he would proceed to particularize the most striking passages to which he deems them applicable, faithfully noticing the frequent or infrequent recurrence of similar merits or defects, and as faithfully distinguishing what is characteristic from what is accidental, or a mere flagging of the wing. Then if his promises be rational, his deductions legitimate, and his conclusions justly applied,

the reader, and possibly the poet himself, may adopt his judgment in the light of judgment and in the independence of free-agency. If he has erred, he presents his errors in a definite place and tangible form, and holds the torch and guides the way to their detection.

I most willingly admit, and estimate at a high value, the services which the EDINBURGH REVIEW, and others formed afterwards on the same plan, have rendered to society in the diffusion of knowledge. I think the commencement of the EDINBURGH REVIEW an important epoch in periodical criticism; and that it has a claim upon the gratitude of the literary republic, and indeed of the reading public at large, for having originated the scheme of reviewing those books only, which are susceptible and deserving of argumentative criticism. Not less meritorious, and far more faithfully and in general far more ably executed, is their plan of supplying the vacant place of the trash or mediocrity, wisely left to sink into oblivion by its own weight, with original essays on the most interesting subjects of the time, religious, or political, in which the titles of the books or pamphlets prefixed furnish only the name and occasion of the disquisition. I do not arraign the keenness, or asperity of its damnatory style, in and for itself, as long as the author is addressed or treated as the mere impersonation of the work then under trial. I have no quarrel with them on this account, as long as no personal allusions are admitted, and no recommitment (for new trial) of juvenile performances that were published, perhaps forgotten, many years before the commencement of the review; since for the forcing back of such works to public notice no motives are easily assignable but such as are furnished to the critic by his own personal malignity, or what is still worse, by a habit of malignity in the form of mere wantonness.

> "No private grudge they need, no personal spite:
> The *viva sectio* is its own delight!
> All enmity, all envy, they disclaim,
> Disinterested thieves of our good name;
> Cool, sober murderers of their neighbor's fame!" — S. T. C.

Every censure, every sarcasm respecting a publication which the critic, with the criticized work before him, can make good, is the critic's right. The writer is authorized to reply, but not to complain. Neither can any one prescribe to the critic, how soft or how hard, how friendly or how bitter, shall be the phrases which he is to select for the expression of such reprehension or ridicule. The critic must know what effect it is his object to produce and with a view to this effect must he weigh his words. But as soon as the critic betrays that he knows more of his author than the author's publications could have told him; as soon as from this more intimate knowledge, elsewhere obtained, he avails himself of the slightest trait *against* the author; his censure instantly becomes personal injury, his sarcasms personal insults. He ceases to be a critic, and takes on him the most contemptible character to which a rational creature can be degraded, that of a gossip, backbiter, and *pasquillant:*[1] but with this heavy aggravation, that he steals the unquiet, the deforming passions of the world into the museum, into the very place which, next to the chapel and oratory, should be our sanctuary and secure place of refuge; offers abominations on the altar of the Muses; and makes its sacred paling the very circle in which he conjures up the lying and profane spirit.

This determination of unlicensed personality, and of permitted and legitimate censure (which I owe in part to the illustrious Lessing, himself a model of acute, spirited, sometimes stinging, but always argumentative and honourable, criticism) is beyond controversy the true one: and though I would not myself exercise all the rights of the latter, yet, let but the former be excluded, I submit myself to its exercise in the hands of others, without complaint and without resentment.

Let a communication be formed between any number of learned men in the various branches of science and literature; and whether the president and central committee be in London, or Edinburgh, if only they previously lay aside their individuality and pledge themselves inwardly, as well as ostensibly, to administer judgment

[1] *lampooner.*

according to a constitution and code of laws: and if by grounding this code on the two-fold basis of universal morals and philosophic reason, independent of all foreseen application to particular works and authors, they obtain the right to speak each as the representative of their body corporate; they shall have honour and good wishes from me, and I shall accord to them their fair dignities, though self-assumed, not less cheerfully than if I could inquire concerning them in the herald's office, or turn to them in the book of peerage. However loud may be the outcries for prevented or subverted reputation, however numerous and impatient the complaints of merciless severity and insupportable despotism, I shall neither feel, nor utter aught but to the defence and justification of the critical machine. Should any literary Quixote find himself provoked by its sounds and regular movements, I should admonish him with Sancho Panza, that it is no giant but a windmill; there it stands on its own place, and its own hillock, never goes out of its way to attack any one, and to none and from none either gives or asks assistance. When the public press has poured in any parts of its produce between its mill-stones, it grinds it off, one man's sack the same as another, and with whatever wind may happen to be then blowing. All the two-and-thirty winds are alike its friends. Of the whole wide atmosphere it does not desire a single finger-breadth more than what is necessary for its sails to turn round in. But this space must be left free and unimpeded. Gnats, beetles, wasps, butterflies, and the whole tribe of ephemerals and insignificants, may flit in and out and between; may hum, and buzz, and jarr, may shrill their tiny pipes, and wind their puny horns, unchastised and unnoticed. But idlers and bravadoes of larger size and prouder show must beware how they place themselves within its sweep. Much less may they presume to lay hands on the sails, the strength of which is neither greater nor less than as the wind is, which drives them round. Whomsoever the remorseless arm slings aloft, or whirls along with it in the air, he has himself alone to blame; though, when the same arm throws him from it, it will more often double than break the force of his fall.

Putting aside the too manifest and too frequent interference of national party, and even personal predilection or aversion; and reserving for deeper feelings those worse and more criminal intrusions into the sacredness of private life, which not seldom merit legal rather than literary chastisement, the two principal objects and occasions which I find for blame and regret in the conduct of the review in question are: first, its unfaithfulness to its own announced and excellent plan, by subjecting to criticism works neither indecent nor immoral, yet of such trifling importance even in point of size and, according to the critic's own verdict, so devoid of all merit, as must excite in the most candid mind the suspicion, either that dislike or vindictive feelings were to increase the sale of the review by flattering the malignant passions of human nature. That I may not myself become subject to the charge which I am bringing against others, by an accusation without proof, I refer to the article on Dr. Rennell's sermon in the very first number of The Edinburgh Review as an illustration of my meaning. If in looking through all the succeeding volumes the reader should find this a solitary instance, I must submit to that painful forfeiture of esteem, which awaits a groundless or exaggerated charge.

The second point of objection belongs to this review only in common with all other works of periodical criticism; at least, it applies in common to the general system of all, whatever exception there may be in favour of particular articles. Or if it attaches to The Edinburgh Review and to its only corrival (The Quarterly), with any peculiar force, this results from the superiority of talent, acquirement, and information which both have so undeniably displayed; and which doubtless deepens the regret though not the blame. I am referring to the substitution of assertion for argument; to the frequency of arbitrary and sometimes petulant verdicts, not seldom unsupported even by a single quotation from the work condemned, which might at least have explained the critic's meaning, if it did not prove the justice of his sentence. Even where this is not the case, the extracts are too often made without reference to any general grounds or rules from which the faultiness

or inadmissibility of the qualities attributed may be deduced; and without any attempt to show that the qualities *are* attributable to the passage extracted. I have met with such extracts from Mr. Wordsworth's poems, annexed to such assertions, as led me to imagine that the reviewer, having written his critique before he had read the work, had then *pricked with a pin* for passages wherewith to illustrate the various branches of his preconceived opinions. By what principle of rational choice can we suppose a critic to have been directed (at least in a Christian country, and himself, we hope, a Christian) who gives the following lines, portraying the fervour of solitary devotion excited by the magnificent display of the Almighty's works, as a proof and example of an author's tendency to *downright ravings*, and absolute unintelligibility?

> "O then what soul was his, when on the tops
> Of the high mountains he beheld the sun
> Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked —
> Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth,
> And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
> In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
> And in their silent faces did he read
> Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
> Nor any *voice* of joy: his spirit drank
> The spectacle! sensation, soul and form,
> All melted into him; they swallowed up
> His animal being; in them did he live,
> And by them did he live: they were his life." [2]

Can it be expected that either the author or his admirers should be induced to pay any serious attention to decisions which prove nothing but the pitiable state of the critic's own taste and sensibility? On opening the review they see a favourite passage, of the force and truth of which they had an intuitive certainty in their own inward experience confirmed, if confirmation it could receive, by the sympathy of their most enlightened friends; some of whom, perhaps, even in the world's opinion, hold a higher intellectual rank than the critic himself would presume to claim. And

[2] *Excursion*, Book 1. — S. C. First lines changed later.

this very passage they find selected as the characteristic effusion of a mind *deserted by reason*, as furnishing evidence that the writer was raving, or he could not have thus strung words together without sense or purpose! No diversity of taste seems capable of explaining such a contrast in judgment.

That I had over-rated the merit of a passage or poem, that I had erred concerning the degree of its excellence, I might be easily induced to believe or apprehend. But that lines, the sense of which I had analyzed and found consonant with all the best convictions of my understanding; and the imagery and diction of which had collected round those convictions my noblest as well as my most delightful feelings; that I should admit such lines to be mere nonsense or lunacy, is too much for the most ingenious arguments to effect. But that such a revolution of taste should be brought about by a few broad assertions, seems little less than impossible. On the contrary, it would require an effort of charity not to dismiss the criticism with the aphorism of the wise man, *in animam malevolam sapientia haud intrare potest.*[3]

What then if this very critic should have cited a large number of single lines and even of long paragraphs, which he himself acknowledges to possess eminent and original beauty? What if he himself has owned that beauties as great are scattered in abundance throughout the whole book? And yet, though under this impression, should have commenced his critique in vulgar exultation with a prophecy meant to secure its own fulfilment? With a "This won't do!" What? if after such acknowledgments extorted from his own judgment he should proceed from charge to charge of tameness and raving flights and flatness; and at length, consigning the author to the house of incurables, should conclude with a strain of rudest contempt evidently grounded in the distempered state of his own moral associations? Suppose too all this done without a single leading principle established or even announced, and without any one attempt at argumentative deduction, though the poet had presented a more than usual

[3] *wisdom cannot enter a malevolent soul.*

opportunity for it, by having previously made public his own principles of judgment in poetry, and supported them by a connected train of reasoning!

The office and duty of the poet is to select the most dignified as well as

"The gayest, happiest attitude of things." [4]

The reverse, for in all cases a reverse is possible, is the appropriate business of burlesque and travesty, a predominant taste for which has been always deemed a mark of a low and degraded mind. When I was at Rome, among many other visits to the tomb of Julius II. I went thither once with a Prussian artist, a man of genius and great vivacity of feeling. As we were gazing on Michael Angelo's Moses, our conversation turned on the horns and beard of that stupendous statue; of the necessity of each to support the other; of the superhuman effect of the former, and the necessity of the existence of both to give a harmony and integrity both to the image and the feeling excited by it. Conceive them removed, and the statue would become *un*-natural, without being *super*-natural. We called to mind the horns of the rising sun; and I repeated the noble passage from Taylor's Holy Dying. That horns were the emblem of power and sovereignty among the Eastern nations, and are still retained as such in Abyssinia; the Achelous of the ancient Greeks; and the probable ideas and feelings that originally suggested the mixture of the human and the brute form in the figure, by which they realize the idea of their mysterious Pan, as representing intelligence blended with a darker power, deeper, mightier, and more universal than the conscious intellect of man; than intelligence; — all these thoughts and recollections passed in procession before our minds. My companion, who possessed more than his share of the hatred which his countrymen bore to the French, had just observed to me, "A Frenchman, Sir, is the only animal in the human shape that by no possibility can lift itself up to religion and poetry:" when lo! two French

[4] Akenside's *Pleasures of Imagination*, Book 1, line 29. — S. C.

officers of distinction and rank entered the church! "Mark you," whispered the Prussian, "the first thing which those scoundrels will notice — for they will begin by instantly noticing the statue in parts, without one moment's pause of admiration impressed by the whole — will be the horns and the beard. And the associations which they will immediately connect with them will be those of a *he-goat*. . . ." Never did man guess more luckily. Had he inherited a portion of the great legislator's prophetic powers, whose statue we had been contemplating, he could scarcely have uttered words more coincident with the result; for even as he had said, so it came to pass.

In THE EXCURSION the poet has introduced an old man, born in humble but not abject circumstances, who had enjoyed more than usual advantages of education, both from books and from the more awful discipline of nature. This person he represents as having been driven by the restlessness of fervid feelings, and from a craving intellect, to an itinerant life; and as having in consequence passed the larger portion of his time, from earliest manhood, in villages and hamlets from door to door.

"A vagrant Merchant bent beneath his load." [5]

Now whether this be a character appropriate to a lofty didactic poem, is perhaps questionable. It presents a fair subject for controversy; and the question is to be determined by the congruity or incongruity of such a character with what shall be proved to be the essential constituents of poetry. But surely the critic who, passing by all the opportunities which such a mode of life would present to such a man; all the advantages of the liberty of nature, of solitude, and of solitary thought; all the varieties of places and seasons, through which his track had lain, with all the varying imagery they bring with them; and lastly, all the observations of men,

"Their manners, their enjoyments, and pursuits,
Their passions and their feelings, —" [6]

[5] Book I. — S. C. Changed later.

[6] Book I. — S. C.

which the memory of these yearly journeys must have given and recalled to such a mind — the critic, I say, who from the multitude of possible associations should pass by all these in order to fix his attention exclusively on *the pin-papers*, and *stay-tapes*, which *might* have been among the wares of his pack; this critic, in my opinion, can not be thought to possess a much higher or much healthier state of moral feeling than the Frenchmen above recorded.

XXVI.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

(1778–1830.)

TABLE-TALK: OPINIONS ON BOOKS, MEN, AND THINGS.

[Written about 1821–22.]

Essay XIII. — On Application to Study.

No one is idle, who can do anything. It is conscious inability, or the sense of repeated failure, that prevents us from undertaking, or deters us from the prosecution of any work.

Wilson the painter might be mentioned as an exception to this rule; for he was said to be an indolent man. After bestowing a few touches on a picture, he grew tired, and said to any friend who called in, "Now, let us go somewhere!" But the fact is, that Wilson could not finish his pictures minutely; and that those few masterly touches, carelessly thrown in of a morning, were all that he could do. The rest would have been labour lost. Morland has been referred to as another man of genius, who could only be brought to work by fits and snatches. But his landscapes and figures (whatever degree of merit they might possess) were mere hasty sketches; and he could produce all that he was capable of, in the first half-hour, as well as in twenty years. Why bestow additional pains without additional effect? What he did was from the impulse of the moment, from the lively impression of some coarse, but striking object; and with that impulse his efforts ceased, as they justly ought. There is no use in labouring *invitâ Minerva*[1] — nor any difficulty in it, when the Muse is not averse.

[1] *when Minerva is unwilling.*

"The labour we delight in physics pain."

Denner finished his unmeaning portraits with a microscope, and without being ever weary of his fruitless task; for the essence of his genius was industry. Sir Joshua Reynolds, courted by the Graces and by Fortune, was hardly ever out of his painting-room, and lamented a few days, at any time spent at a friend's house or at a nobleman's seat in the country, as so much time lost. That darkly-illuminated room "to him a kingdom was:" his pencil was the sceptre that he wielded, and the throne on which his sitters were placed, a throne for Fame. Here he felt indeed at home; here the current of his ideas flowed full and strong; here he felt most self-possession; most command over others; and the sense of power urged him on to his delightful task with a sort of vernal cheerfulness and vigour, even in the decline of life. The feeling of weakness and incapacity would have made his hand soon falter, would have rebutted him from his object; or had the canvas mocked, and been insensible to his toil, instead of gradually turning to

"A lucid mirror, in which nature saw
All her reflected features,"

he would, like so many others, have thrown down his pencil in despair, or proceeded reluctantly, without spirit and without success. Claude Lorraine, in like manner, spent whole mornings on the banks of the Tiber or in his study, eliciting beauty after beauty, adding touch to touch, getting nearer and nearer to perfection, luxuriating in endless felicity — not merely giving the salient points, but filling up the whole intermediate space with continuous grace and beauty! What farther motive was necessary to induce him to persevere, but the bounty of his fate? What greater pleasure could he seek for, than that of seeing the perfect image of his mind reflected in the work of his hand? But as is the pleasure and the confidence produced by consummate skill, so is the pain and the disheartening effect of total failure. When for the fair face of nature we only see an unsightly blot issuing

from our best endeavours, then the nerves slacken, the tears fill the eyes, and the painter turns away from his art, as the lover from a mistress that scorns him. Alas! how many such have, as the poet says,

> "Begun in gladness;
> Whereof has come in the end despondency and madness —"

not for want of will to proceed, (oh, no!) but for lack of power!

Hence it is that those often do best (up to a certain point of common-place success) who have least knowledge and least ambition to excel. Their taste keeps pace with their capacity; and they are not deterred by insurmountable difficulties, of which they have no idea. I have known artists (for instance) of considerable merit, and a certain native rough strength and resolution of mind, who have been active and enterprizing in their profession, but who never seemed to think of any works but those which they had in hand; they never spoke of a picture, or appeared to have seen one; to them Titian, Raphael, Rubens, Rembrandt, Correggio, were as if they had never been: no tones, mellowed by time to soft perfection, lured them to their luckless doom, no divine forms baffled their vain embrace; no sound of immortality rung in their ears, or drew off their attention from the calls of creditors or of hunger: they walked through collections of the finest works, like the Children in the Fiery Furnace, untouched, unapproached. With these true *terræ filii*[2] the art might be supposed to begin and end: they thought only of the subject of their next production, the size of their next canvas, the grouping, the getting in of the figures; and conducted their work to its conclusion with as little distraction of mind and as few misgivings, as a stage-coachman conducts a stage, or a carrier delivers a bale of goods, according to its destination. Such persons, if they do not rise above, at least seldom sink below themselves. They do not soar to the "highest Heaven of invention," nor penetrate the inmost recesses of the heart; but they succeed in all that they attempt or are

[2] *sons of earth.*

capable of, as men of business and of industry in their calling. For them the veil of the Temple of Art is not rent asunder, and it is well: one glimpse of the Sanctuary, of the Holy of the Holies, might palsy their hands, and bedim their sight forever after! I think there are two mistakes, common enough on this subject, viz.: That men of genius, or of first-rate capacity, do little, except by intermittent fits, or *per saltum* — and that they do that little in a slight and slovenly manner. There may be instances of this; but they are not the highest, and they are the exceptions, not the rule. On the contrary, the greatest artists have in general been the most prolific or the most elaborate, as the best writers have been frequently the most voluminous as well as indefatigable. We have a great living instance among writers, that the quality of a man's productions is not to be estimated in the inverse ratio of their quantity, I mean in the *Author of Waverley;* the fecundity of whose pen is no less admirable than its felicity. Shakespear is another instance of the same prodigality of genius: his materials being endlessly poured forth with no niggard or fastidious hand, and the mastery of the execution being (in many respects at least) equal to the boldness of the design. As one example among others that I might cite of the attention which he gave to his subject, it is sufficient to observe, that there is scarcely a word in any of his more striking passages that can be altered for the better. If any person, for instance, is trying to recollect a favourite line, and cannot hit upon some particular expression, it is in vain to think of substituting any other so good. That in the original text is not merely the best, but it seems the only right one. I will stop to illustrate this point a little. I was at a loss the other day for the line in Henry V.,

"*Nice* customs curtesy to great kings."

I could not recollect the word *nice:* I tried a number of others, such as *old, grave*, &c. — they would none of them do, but seemed all heavy, lumbering, or from the purpose: the word *nice*, on the contrary, appeared to drop into its place, and be ready to assist in paying the reverence due. Again,

"A jest's *prosperity* lies in the ear
Of him that hears it."

I thought, in quoting from memory, of "A jest's *success*," "A jest's *renown*," &c. I then turned to the volume, and there found the very word that of all others expressed the idea. Had Shakespear searched through the four quarters of the globe, he could not have lighted on another to convey so exactly what he meant — a *casual*, *hollow*, *sounding* success! I could multiply such examples, but that I am sure the reader will easily supply them himself; and they show sufficiently that Shakespear was not (as he is often represented) a loose or clumsy writer. The bold, happy texture of his style, in which every word is prominent, and yet cannot be torn from its place without violence, any more than a limb from the body, is (one should think) the result either of vigilant painstaking, or of unerring intuitive perception, and not the mark of crude conceptions, or "the random, blindfold blows of ignorance."

There cannot be a greater contradiction to the common prejudice that "Genius is naturally a truant and a vagabond," than the astonishing and (on the hypothesis) unaccountable number of *chefs-d'œuvre* left behind them by the Old Masters. The stream of their invention supplies the taste of successive generations like a river: they furnish a hundred Galleries, and preclude competition, not more by the excellence than by the extent of their performances. Take Raphael and Rubens for instance. There are works of theirs in single Collections enough to occupy a long and laborious life, and yet their works are spread through all the Collections of Europe. They seem to have cost them no more labour than if they "had drawn in their breath and puffed it forth again." But we know that they made drawings, studies, sketches of all the principal of these, with the care and caution of the merest tyros in the art; and they remain equal proofs of their capacity and diligence. The *Cartoons* of Raphael alone might have employed many years, and made a life of illustrious labour, though they look as if they had been struck off at a blow, and are not a tenth part of what he produced in his short but bright career. Titian and Michael

Angelo lived longer; but they worked as hard and did as well. Shall we bring in competition with examples like these some trashy caricaturist, or idle dauber, who has no sense of the infinite resources of nature or art, nor consequently any power to employ himself upon them for any length of time or to any purpose, to prove that genius and regular industry are incompatible qualities?

In my opinion, the very superiority of the works of the great painters (instead of being a bar to) accounts for their multiplicity. Power is pleasure; and pleasure sweetens pain. A fine poet thus describes the effect of the sight of nature on his mind:

> "The sounding cataract
> Haunted me like a passion; the tall rock,
> The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood.
> Their colours and their forms were then to me
> An appetite, a feeling, and a love,
> That had no need of a remoter charm
> By thought supplied, or any interest
> Unborrowed from the eye."

So the forms of nature, or the human form divine, stood before the great artists of old, nor required any other stimulus to lead the eye to survey, or the hand to embody them, than the pleasure derived from the inspiration of the subject, and "propulsive force" of the mimic creation. The grandeur of their works was an argument with them, not to stop short, but to proceed. They could have no higher excitement or satisfaction than in the exercise of their art and endless generation of truth and beauty. Success prompts to exertion; and habit facilitates success. It is idle to suppose we can exhaust nature; and the more we employ our own faculties, the more we strengthen them and enrich our stores of observation and invention. The more we do, the more we can do. Not indeed if we *get our ideas out of our own heads* — that stock is soon exhausted, and we recur to tiresome, vapid imitations of ourselves. But this is the difference between real and mock talent, between genius and affectation. Nature is not limited, nor does it become effete, like our conceit and vanity. The closer we ex-

amine it, the more it refines upon us; it expands as we enlarge and shift our view; it "grows with our growth, and strengthens with our strength." The subjects are endless; and our capacity is invigorated as it is called out by occasion and necessity. He who does nothing, renders himself incapable of doing anything; but while we are executing any work, we are preparing and qualifying ourselves to undertake another. The principles are the same in all nature; and we understand them better as we verify them by experience and practice. It is not as if there was a given number of subjects to work upon, or a set of *innate* or preconceived ideas in our minds, which we encroached upon with every new design; the subjects, as I said before, are endless, and we acquire ideas by imparting them. Our expenditure of intellectual wealth makes us rich; we can only be liberal as we have previously accumulated the means. By lying idle, as by standing still, we are confined to the same trite, narrow round of topics: by continuing our efforts, as by moving forwards in a road, we extend our views, and discover continually new tracts of country. Genius, like humanity, rusts for want of use.

Habit also gives promptness; and the soul of dispatch is decision. One man may write a book or paint a picture, while another is deliberating about the plan or the title-page. The great painters were able to do so much, because they knew exactly what they meant to do, and how to set about it. They were thorough-bred workmen, and were not learning their art while they were exercising it. We can do a great deal in a short time if we only know how. Thus an author may become very voluminous, who only employs an hour or two in a day in study. If he has once obtained, by habit and reflection, a use of his pen with plenty of materials to work upon, the pages vanish before him. The time lost is in beginning, or in stopping after we have begun. If we only go forwards with spirit and confidence, we shall soon arrive at the end of our journey. A practised writer ought never to hesitate for a sentence from the moment he sets pen to paper, or think about the course he is to take. He must trust to his previous

knowledge of the subject and to his immediate impulses, and he will get to the close of his task without accidents or loss of time. I can easily understand how the old divines and controversialists produced their folios: I could write folios myself, if I rose early and sat up late at this kind of occupation. But I confess I should be soon tired of it, besides wearying the reader.

In one sense, art is long and life is short. In another sense, this aphorism is not true. The best of us are idle half our time. It is wonderful how much is done in a short space, provided we set about it properly, and give our minds wholly to it. Let any one devote himself to any art or science ever so strenuously, and he will still have leisure to make considerable progress in half a dozen other acquirements. Leonardo da Vinci was a mathematician, a musician, a poet, and an anatomist, besides being one of the greatest painters of his age. The Prince of Painters was a courtier, a lover, and fond of dress and company. Michael Angelo was a prodigy of versatility of talent — a writer of Sonnets (which Wordsworth has thought worth translating) and the friend of Dante. Salvator was a lutenist and a satirist. Titian was an elegant letter-writer, and a finished gentleman. Sir Joshua Reynolds's Discourses are more polished and classical even than any of his pictures. Let a man do all he can in any one branch of study, he must either exhaust himself and doze over it, or vary his pursuit, or else lie idle. All our real labour lies in a nut-shell. The mind makes, at some period or other, one Herculean effort, and the rest is mechanical. We have to climb a steep and narrow precipice at first; but after that, the way is broad and easy, where we may drive several accomplishments abreast. Men should have one principal pursuit, which may be both agreeably and advantageously diversified with other lighter ones, as the subordinate parts of a picture may be managed so as to give effect to the centre group. It has been observed by a sensible man, that the having a regular occupation or professional duties to attend to is no excuse for putting forth an inelegant or inaccurate work; for a habit of industry braces and strengthens the mind, and enables it to wield its ener-

gies with additional ease and steadier purpose. Were I allowed to instance in myself, if what I write at present is worth nothing, at least it costs me nothing. But it cost me a great deal twenty years ago. I have added little to my stock since then, and taken little from it. I "unfold the book and volume of the brain," and transcribe the characters I see there as mechanically as any one might copy the letters in a sampler. I do not say they came there mechanically — I transfer them to the paper mechanically. After eight or ten years' hard study, an author (at least) may go to sleep.

I do not conceive rapidity of execution necessarily implies slovenliness or crudeness. On the contrary, I believe it is often productive both of sharpness and freedom. The eagerness of composition strikes out sparkles of fancy, and runs the thoughts more naturally and closely into one another. There may be less formal method, but there is more life and spirit and truth. In the play and agitation of the mind, it runs over, and we dally with the subject, as the glass-blower rapidly shapes the vitreous fluid. A number of new thoughts rise up spontaneously, and they come in the proper places, because they arise from the occasion. They are also sure to partake of the warmth and vividness of that ebullition of mind from which they spring. *Spiritus precipitandus est.*[3] In these sort of voluntaries in composition, the thoughts are worked up to a sort of projection: the grasp of the subject, the presence of mind, the flow of expression, must be something akin to *extempore* speaking; or perhaps such bold but finished draughts may be compared to *fresco* paintings, which imply a life of study and great previous preparation, but of which the execution is momentary and irrevocable. I will add a single remark on a point that has been much disputed. Mr. Cobbett lays it down that the first word that occurs is always the best. I would venture to differ from so great an authority. Mr. Cobbett himself indeed writes as easily and as well as he talks; but he perhaps is hardly a rule for others without his practice and without his ability. In

[3] *The spirit must be hurried forth.*

the hurry of composition three or four words may present themselves, one on the back of the other, and the last may be the best and right one. I grant thus much, that it is in vain to seek for the word we want, or endeavour to get at it second-hand, or as a paraphrase on some other word — it must come of itself, or arise out of an immediate impression or lively intuition of the subject; that is, the proper word must be suggested immediately by the thought, but it need not be presented as soon as called for. It is the same in trying to recollect the names of places, persons, &c., where we cannot force our memory; they must come of themselves by natural association, as it were; but they may occur to us when we least think of it, owing to some casual circumstance or link of connection, and long after we have given up the search. Proper expressions rise to the surface from the heat and fermentation of the mind, like bubbles on an agitated stream. It is this which produces a clear and sparkling style.

In painting, great execution supplies the place of high finishing. A few vigorous touches, properly and rapidly disposed, will often give more of the appearance and texture (even) of natural objects than the most heavy and laborious details. But this masterly style of execution is very different from coarse daubing. I do not think, however, that the pains or polish an artist bestows upon his works necessarily interferes with their number. He only grows more enamoured of his task, proportionably patient, indefatigable, and devotes more of the day to study. The time we lose is not in overdoing what we are about, but in doing nothing. Rubens had great facility of execution, and seldom went into the details. Yet Raphael, whose oil-pictures were exact and laboured, achieved, according to the length of time he lived, very nearly as much as he. In filling up the parts of his pictures, and giving them the last perfection they were capable of, he filled up his leisure hours, which otherwise would have lain idle on his hands. I have sometimes accounted for the slow progress of certain artists from the unfinished state in which they have left their works at last. These were evidently done by fits and throes — there was no appearance

of continuous labour — one figure had been thrown in at a venture, and then another; and in the intervals between these convulsive and random efforts, more time had been wasted than could have been spent in working up each individual figure on the sure principles of art, and by a careful inspection of nature to the utmost point of practicable perfection.

Some persons are afraid of their own works; and having made one or two successful efforts, attempt nothing ever after. They stand still midway in the road to fame, from being startled at the shadow of their own reputation. This is a needless alarm. If what they have already done possesses real power, this will increase with exercise; if it has not this power, it is not sufficient to ensure them lasting fame. Such delicate pretenders tremble on the brink of *ideal* perfection, like dew-drops on the edge of flowers; and are fascinated, like so many Narcissuses, with the image of themselves, reflected from the public admiration. It is seldom indeed, that this cautious repose will answer its end. While seeking to sustain our reputation at the height, we are forgotten. Shakespear gave different advice, and himself acted upon it.

> ". . . Perseverance, dear my lord,
> Keeps honour bright. To have done, is to hang
> Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail,
> In monumental mockery. Take the instant way,
> For honour travels in a strait so narrow,
> Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path;
> For emulation hath a thousand sons,
> That one by one pursue. If you give way,
> Or hedge aside from the direct forth-right,
> Like to an enter'd tide, they all rush by,
> And leave you hindmost: —
> Or like a gallant horse, fall'n in first rank,
> Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
> O'er-run and trampled. Then what they do in present,
> Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours:
> For time is like a fashionable host,
> That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,

And with his arms outstretch'd as he would fly,
Grasps in the comer. Welcome ever smiles,
And farewell goes out sighing. O let not virtue seek
Remuneration for the thing it was; for beauty, wit,
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating Time.
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,
That all with one consent praise new-born gauds,
Though they are made and moulded of things past;
And give to dust that is a little gilt
More laud than gilt o'er dusted.
The present eye praises the present object."

Troilus and Cressida, III. 3, 150–180.

I cannot very well conceive how it is that some writers (even of taste and genius) spend whole years in mere corrections for the press, as it were — in polishing a line or adjusting a comma. They take long to consider, exactly as there is nothing worth the trouble of a moment's thought; and the more they deliberate, the farther they are from deciding: for their fastidiousness increases with the indulgence of it, nor is there any real ground for preference. They are in the situation of *Ned Softly* in the TATLER, who was a whole morning debating whether a line of poetical epistle should run —

"You sing your song with so much art;"

or

"Your song you sing with so much art."

These are points that it is impossible ever to come to a determination about; and it is only a proof of a little mind ever to have entertained the question at all.

There is a class of persons whose minds seem to move in an element of littleness; or rather, that are entangled in trifling difficulties, and incapable of extricating themselves from them. There was a remarkable instance of this improgressive, ineffectual, restless activity of temper in a late celebrated and very ingenious landscape-painter. "Never ending, still beginning," his mind

seemed entirely made up of points and fractions, nor could he by any means arrive at a conclusion or a valuable whole. He made it his boast that he never sat with his hands before him, and yet he never did anything. His power and his time were frittered away in an unfortunate, uneasy, fidgetty attention to little things. The first picture he ever painted (when a mere boy) was a copy of his father's house; and he began it by counting the number of bricks in the front upwards and lengthways, and then made a scale of them on his canvas. This literal style and mode of study stuck to him to the last. He was placed under Wilson, whose example (if anything could) might have cured him of this pettiness of conception; but nature prevailed, as it almost always does. To take pains to no purpose, seemed to be his motto, and the delight of his life. He left (when he died, not long ago) heaps of canvasses with elaborately finished pencil outlines on them, and with perhaps a little dead colouring added here and there. In this state they were thrown aside, as if he grew tired of his occupation the instant it gave a promise of turning to account, and his whole object in the pursuit of art was to erect scaffoldings. The same intense interest in the most frivolous things extended to the common concerns of life, to the arranging of his letters, the labelllng of his books, and the inventory of his wardrobe. Yet he was a man of sense, who saw the folly and the waste of time in all this, and could warn others against it. The perceiving our own weaknesses enables us to give others excellent advice, but it does not teach us to reform them ourselves. "Physician, heal thyself," is the hardest lesson to follow. Nobody knew better than our artist that repose is necessary to great efforts, and that he who is never idle, labours in vain!

Another error is to spend one's life in procrastination and preparations for the future. Persons of this turn of mind stop at the threshold of art, and accumulate the means of improvement, till they obstruct their progress to the end. They are always putting off the evil day and excuse themselves for doing nothing by commencing some new and indispensable course of study.

Their projects are magnificent, but remote, and require years to complete or to put them in execution. Fame is seen in the horizon, and flies before them. Like the recreant boastful knight in Spenser, they turn their backs on their competitors to make a great career, but never return to the charge. They make themselves masters of anatomy, of drawing, of perspective; they collect prints, casts, medallions, make studies of heads, of hands, of the bones, the muscles; copy pictures; visit Italy, Greece, and return as they went. They fulfil the proverb, "When you are at Rome, you must do as those at Rome do." This circuitous, erratic pursuit of art can come to no good. It is only an apology for idleness and vanity. Foreign travel especially makes men pedants, not artists. What we seek, we must find at home, or nowhere. The way to do great things is to set about something, and he who cannot find resources in himself or in his own painting-room, will perform the Grand Tour, or go through the circle of the arts and sciences, and end just where he began!

The same remarks that have been here urged with respect to an application to the study of art, will in a great measure (though not in every particular,) apply to an attention to business: I mean, that exertion will generally follow success and opportunity in the one, as it does confidence and talent in the other. Give a man a motive to work, and he will work. A lawyer who is regularly feed, seldom neglects to look over his briefs: the more business, the more industry. The stress laid upon early rising is preposterous. If we have anything to do when we get up, we shall not lie in bed, to a certainty. Thomson the poet was found late in bed by Dr. Burney, and asked why he had not risen earlier. The Scotchman wisely answered, "I had no motive, young man!" What, indeed, had he to do after writing the SEASONS, but to dream out the rest of his existence, or employ it in writing the CASTLE OF INDOLENCE![4]

[4] School-boys attend to their tasks as soon as they acquire a relish for study, and they apply to that for which they find they have a capacity. — From HAZLITT'S Note.

XXVII.

CHARLES LAMB.

(1775–1834.)

THE ESSAYS OF ELIA.

[Written in 1821–1826.]

1. The Old and the New Schoolmaster.[1]

My reading has been lamentably desultory and immethodical. Odd, out of the way, old English plays and treatises, have supplied me with most of my notions and ways of feeling. In everything that relates to *science*, I am a whole Encyclopædia behind the rest of the world. I should have scarcely cut a figure among the franklins, or country gentlemen, in King John's days. I know less geography than a schoolboy of six weeks' standing. To me a map of old Ortelius is as authentic as Arrowsmith. I do not know whereabout Africa merges into Asia; whether Ethiopia lie in one or other of those great divisions; nor can form the remotest conjecture of the position of New South Wales, or Van Diemen's Land. Yet do I hold a correspondence with a very dear friend in the first-named of these two Terræ Incognitæ. I have no astronomy. I do not know where to look for the Bear, or Charles's Wain; the place of any star; or the name of any of them at sight. I guess at Venus only by her brightness — and if the sun on some portentous morn were to make his first appearance in the West, I verily believe that, while all the world were gasping in apprehension about me, I alone should stand unterrified, from sheer incuriosity and want of observation. Of history and

[1] From *The London Magazine*, May, 1821.

chronology I possess some vague points, such as one cannot help picking up in the course of miscellaneous study; but I never deliberately sat down to a chronicle, even of my own country. I have most dim apprehensions of the four great monarchies; and sometimes the Assyrian, sometimes the Persian, floats as *first* in my fancy. I make the widest conjectures concerning Egypt, and her shepherd kings. My friend *M.*, with great painstaking, got me to think I understood the first proposition in Euclid, but gave me over in despair at the second. I am entirely unacquainted with the modern languages; and, like a better man than myself, have "small Latin and less Greek." I am a stranger to the shapes and texture of the commonest trees, herbs, flowers — not from the circumstance of my being town-born — for I should have brought the same inobservant spirit into the world with me, had I first seen it "on Devon's leafy shores," — and am no less at a loss among purely town-objects, tools, engines, mechanic processes. — Not that I affect ignorance — but my head has not many mansions, nor spacious; and I have been obliged to fill it with such cabinet curiosities as it can hold without aching. I sometimes wonder, how I have passed my probation with so little discredit in the world, as I have done, upon so meagre a stock. But the fact is, a man may do very well with a very little knowledge, and scarce be found out, in mixed company; everybody is so much more ready to produce his own, than to call for a display of your acquisitions. But in a *tête-à-tête* there is no shuffling. The truth will out. There is nothing which I dread so much, as the being left alone for a quarter of an hour with a sensible, well-informed man, that does not know me. I lately got into a dilemma of this sort. —

In one of my daily jaunts between Bishopsgate and Shacklewell, the coach stopped to take up a staid-looking gentleman, about the wrong side of thirty, who was giving his parting directions (while the steps were adjusting), in a tone of mild authority, to a tall youth, who seemed to be neither his clerk, his son, nor his servant, but something partaking of all three. The youth was dismissed,

and we drove on. As we were the sole passengers, he naturally enough addressed his conversation to me; and we discussed the merits of the fare, the civility and punctuality of the driver; the circumstance of an opposition coach having been lately set up, with the probabilities of its success — to all which I was enabled to return pretty satisfactory answers, having been drilled into this kind of etiquette by some years' daily practice of riding to and fro in the stage aforesaid — when he suddenly alarmed me by a startling question, whether I had seen the show of prize cattle that morning in Smithfield? Now as I had not seen it, and do not greatly care for such sort of exhibitions, I was obliged to return a cold negative. He seemed a little mortified, as well as astonished, at my declaration, as (it appeared) he was just come fresh from the sight, and doubtless had hoped to compare notes on the subject. However he assured me that I had lost a fine treat, as it far exceeded the show of last year. We were now approaching Norton Folgate, when the sight of some shop-goods *ticketed* freshened him up into a dissertation upon the cheapness of cottons this spring. I was now a little in heart, as the nature of my morning avocations had brought me into some sort of familiarity with the raw material; and I was surprised to find how eloquent I was becoming on the state of the India market — when, presently, he dashed my incipient vanity to the earth at once, by inquiring whether I had ever made any calculation as to the value of the rental of all the retail shops in London. Had he asked of me, what song the Sirens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid himself among women, I might, with Sir Thomas Browne, have hazarded a "wide solution."[2] My companion saw my embarrassment, and, the almshouses beyond Shoreditch just coming in view, with great good-nature and dexterity shifted his conversation to the subject of public charities; which led to the comparative merits of provision for the poor in past and present times, with observations on the old monastic institutions, and charitable orders; — but, finding me rather dimly impressed with some

[2] *Urn Burial.* See *ante*, p. 170.

glimmering notions from old poetic associations, than strongly fortified with any speculations reducible to calculation on the subject, he gave the matter up; and, the country beginning to open more and more upon us, as we approached the turnpike at Kingsland (the destined termination of his journey), he put a home thrust upon me, in the most unfortunate position he could have chosen, by advancing some queries relative to the North Pole Expedition. While I was muttering out something about the Panorama of those strange regions (which I had actually seen), by way of parrying the question, the coach stopping relieved me from any further apprehensions. My companion getting out, left me in the comfortable possession of my ignorance; and I heard him, as he went off, putting questions to an outside passenger, who had alighted with him, regarding an epidemic disorder that had been rife about Dalston, and which, my friend assured him, had gone through five or six schools in that neighbourhood. The truth now flashed upon me, that my companion was a schoolmaster; and that the youth, whom he had parted from at our first acquaintance, must have been one of the bigger boys, or the usher. — He was evidently a kind-hearted man, who did not seem so much desirous of provoking discussion by the questions which he put, as of obtaining information at any rate. It did not appear that he took any interest, either, in such kind of inquiries, for their own sake; but that he was in some way bound to seek for knowledge. A greenish-coloured coat, which he had on, forbade me to surmise that he was a clergyman. The adventure gave birth to some reflections on the difference between persons of his profession in past and present times.

Rest to the souls of those fine old Pedagogues; the breed, long since extinct, of the Lilys, and the Linacres: who, believing that all learning was contained in the languages which they taught, and despising every other acquirement as superficial and useless, came to their task as to a sport! Passing from infancy to age, they dreamed away all their days as in a grammar-school. Revolving in a perpetual cycle of declensions, conjugations, syntaxes,

and prosodies; renewing constantly the occupations which had charmed their studious childhood; rehearsing continually the part of the past; life must have slipped from them at last like one day. They were always in their first garden, reaping harvests of their golden time, among their *Flori-* and their *Spici-legia*,[3] in Arcadia still, but kings; the ferule of their sway not much harsher, but of like dignity with that mild sceptre attributed to King Basileus; the Greek and Latin, their stately Pamela and their Philoclea; with the occasional duncery of some untoward Tyro, serving for a refreshing interlude of a Mopsa, or a clown Damœtas!

With what a savour doth the Preface to Colet's, or (as it is sometimes called) Paul's Accidence, set forth! "To exhort every man to the learning of grammar, that intendeth to attain the understanding of the tongues, wherein is contained a great treasury of wisdom and knowledge, it would seem but vain and lost labour; for so much as it is known, that nothing can surely be ended, whose beginning is either feeble or faulty; and no building be perfect, whereas the foundation and ground-work is ready to fall, and unable to uphold the burden of the frame." How well doth this stately preamble (comparable to those which Milton commendeth as "having been the usage to prefix to some solemn law, then first promulgated by Solon, or Lycurgus") correspond with and illustrate that pious zeal for conformity, expressed in a succeeding clause, which would fence about grammar-rules with the severity of faith articles! — "as for the diversity of grammars, it is well profitably taken away by the kings majesties wisdom, who, foreseeing the inconvenience, and favourably providing the remedie, caused one kind of grammar by sundry learned men to be diligently drawn, and so to be set out, only everywhere to be taught for the use of learners, and for the hurt in changing of schoolmasters." What a *gusto* in that which follows: "wherein it is profitable that he [the pupil] can orderly decline his noun, and his verb." *His* noun!

[3] *Collections of flowers and fruits.*

The fine dream is fading away fast; and the least concern of a teacher in the present day is to inculcate grammar-rules.

The modern schoolmaster is expected to know a little of everything, because his pupil is required not to be entirely ignorant of anything. He must be superficially, if I may so say, omniscient. He is to know something of pneumatics; of chemistry; of whatever is curious, or proper to excite the attention of the youthful mind; an insight into mechanics is desirable, with a touch of statistics; the quality of soils, &c.; botany; the constitution of his country, *cum multis aliis*.[4] You may get a notion of some part of his expected duties by consulting the famous Tractate on Education addressed to Mr. Hartlib.[5]

All these things — these, or the desire of them — he is expected to instil, not by set lessons from professors, which he may charge in the bill, but at school-intervals, as he walks the streets, or saunters through green fields (those natural instructors) with his pupils. The least part of what is expected from him is to be done in school-hours. He must insinuate knowledge at the *mollia tempora fandi*.[6] He must seize every occasion — the season of the year — the time of the day — a passing cloud — a rainbow — a waggon of hay — a regiment of soldiers going by — to inculcate something useful. He can receive no pleasure from a casual glimpse of nature, but must catch at it as an object of instruction. He must interpret beauty into the picturesque. He cannot relish a beggar-man, or a gypsy, for thinking of the suitable improvement. Nothing comes to him, not spoiled by the unsophisticating medium of moral uses. The Universe — that Great Book, as it has been called — is to him indeed, to all intents and purposes, a book, out of which he is doomed to read tedious homilies to distasting schoolboys. Vacations themselves are none to him, he is only rather worse off than before; for commonly he has some intrusive upper-boy fastened upon him at such times: some cadet of a great family; some neglected lump of nobility, or gentry;

[4] *with many other things.*

[5] Milton's Letter on Education.

[6] *suitable times of speaking.*

that he must drag after him to the play, to the panorama, to Mr. Bartley's Orrery, to the Panopticon, or into the country, to a friend's house, or his favourite watering-place. Wherever he goes, this uneasy shadow attends him. A boy is at his board, and in his path, and in all his movements. He is boy-rid, sick of perpetual boy.

Boys are capital fellows in their own way, among their mates; but they are unwholesome companions for grown people. The restraint is felt no less on the one side, than on the other. — Even a child, that "plaything for an hour,"[7] tires *always*. The noises of children, playing their own fancies — as I now hearken to them by fits, sporting on the green before my window, while I am engaged in these grave speculations at my neat suburban retreat at Shacklewell — by distance made more sweet — inexpressibly take from the labour of my task. It is like writing to music. They seem to modulate my periods. They ought at least to do so — for in the voice of that tender age there is a kind of poetry, far unlike the harsh prose-accents of man's conversation. — I should but spoil their sport, and diminish my own sympathy for them, by mingling in their pastime.

I would not be domesticated all my days with a person of very superior capacity to my own — not, if I know myself at all, from any considerations of jealousy, or self-comparison, for the occasional communion with such minds has constituted the fortune and felicity of my life — but the habit of too constant intercourse with spirits above you, instead of raising you, keeps you down. Too frequent doses of original thinking from others, restrain what lesser portion of that faculty you may possess of your own. You get entangled in another man's mind, even as you lose yourself in another man's grounds. You are walking with a tall varlet, whose strides out-pace yours to lassitude. The constant operation of such potent agency would reduce me, I am convinced, to imbecility. You may derive thoughts from others; your way of thinking,

[7] "One of Lamb's quotations from himself. The phrase occurs in a charming poem of three stanzas, in the *Poetry for Children*." — AINGER.

the mould in which your thoughts are cast, must be your own. Intellect may be imparted, but not each man's intellectual frame.

As little as I should wish to be always thus dragged upwards, as little (or rather still less) is it desirable to be stunted downwards by your associates. The trumpet does not more stun you by its loudness, than a whisper teases you by its provoking inaudibility.

Why are we never quite at our ease in the presence of a schoolmaster? — because we are conscious that he is not quite at his ease in ours. He is awkward, and out of place, in the society of his equals. He comes like Gulliver from among his little people, and he cannot fit the stature of his understanding to yours. He cannot meet you on the square. He wants a point given him, like an indifferent whist-player. He is so used to teaching, that he wants to be teaching *you*. One of these professors, upon my complaining that these little sketches of mine were anything but methodical, and that I was unable to make them otherwise, kindly offered to instruct me in the method by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes. — The jests of a schoolmaster are coarse, or thin. They do not *tell* out of school. He is under the restraint of a formal and didactive hypocrisy in company, as a clergyman is under a moral one. He can no more let his intellect loose in society, than the other can his inclinations. — He is forlorn among his co-evals; his juniors cannot be his friends.

"I take blame to myself," said a sensible man of this profession, writing to a friend respecting a youth who had quitted his school abruptly, "that your nephew was not more attached to me. But persons in my situation are more to be pitied, than can well be imagined. We are surrounded by young, and, consequently, ardently affectionate hearts, but *we* can never hope to share an atom of their affections. The relation of master and scholar forbids this. *How pleasing this must be to you, how I envy your feelings*, my friends will sometimes say to me, when they see young men, whom I have educated, return after some years' absence from school, their eyes shining with pleasure, while they shake

hands with their old master, bringing a present of game to me, or a toy to my wife, and thanking me in the warmest terms for my care of their education. A holiday is begged for the boys; the house is a scene of happiness; I, only, am sad at heart. — This fine-spirited and warm-hearted youth, who fancies he repays his master with gratitude for the care of his boyish years — this young man — in the eight long years I watched over him with a parent's anxiety, never could repay me with one look of genuine feeling. He was proud, when I praised; he was submissive, when I reproved him; but he did never *love* me — and what he now mistakes for gratitude and kindness for me, is but a pleasant sensation, which all persons feel at revisiting the scene of their boyish hopes and fears; and the seeing on equal terms the man they were accustomed to look up to with reverence. My wife, too," this interesting correspondent goes on to say, "my once darling Anna, is the wife of a schoolmaster. — When I married her — knowing that the wife of a schoolmaster ought to be a busy notable creature, and fearing that my gentle Anna would ill supply the loss of my dear bustling mother, just then dead, who never sat still, was in every part of the house in a moment, and whom I was obliged sometimes to threaten to fasten down in a chair, to save her from fatiguing herself to death — I expressed my fears, that I was bringing her into a way of life unsuitable to her; and she, who loved me tenderly, promised for my sake to exert herself to perform the duties of her new situation. She promised, and she has kept her word. What wonders will not a woman's love perform? — My house is managed with a propriety and decorum, unknown in other schools; my boys are well-fed, look healthy, and have every proper accommodation; and all this performed with a careful economy, that never descends to meanness. But I have lost my gentle, *helpless* Anna! — When we sit down to enjoy an hour of repose after the fatigue of the day, I am compelled to listen to what have been her useful (and they are really useful) employments through the day, and what she proposes for her to-morrow's task. Her heart and her features are changed by the duties of her

situation. To the boys, she never appears other than the *master's wife*, and she looks up to me as the *boys' master;* to whom all show of love and affection would be highly improper, and unbecoming the dignity of her situation and mine. Yet *this* my gratitude forbids me to hint to her. For my sake she submitted to be this altered creature, and can I reproach her for it? [These kind of complaints are not often drawn from me. I am aware that I am a fortunate, I mean a prosperous man." My feelings prevent me from transcribing any further.] — For the communication of this letter, I am indebted to my cousin Bridget.

2. A Bachelor's Complaint of the Behaviour of Married People.[8]

As a single man, I have spent a good deal of my time in noting down the infirmities of Married People to console myself for those superior pleasures, which they tell me I have lost by remaining as I am.

I cannot say that the quarrels of men and their wives ever made any great impression upon me, or had much tendency to strengthen me in those anti-social resolutions, which I took up long ago upon more substantial considerations. What oftenest offends me at the houses of married persons where I visit, is an error of quite a different description; — it is that they are too loving.

Not too loving neither: that does not explain my meaning. Besides, why should that offend me? The very act of separating themselves from the rest of the world, to have the fuller enjoyment of each other's society, implies that they prefer one another to all the world.

[8] From *The London Magazine*, September, 1822. — This paper, eleven years prior to its reissue as one of the Elian essays in the *London*, appeared (in 1811) in No. 4 of Leigh Hunt's *Reflector*. Upon the occasion of its republication in the Magazine it was subscribed "your humble servant Elia." — Morley.

But what I complain of is, that they carry this preference so undisguisedly, they perk it up in the faces of us single people so shamelessly, you cannot be in their company a moment without being made to feel, by some indirect hint or open avowal, that *you* are not the object of this preference. Now there are some things which give no offence, while implied or taken for granted merely; but expressed, there is much offence in them. If a man were to accost the first homely-featured or plain-dressed young woman of his acquaintance, and tell her bluntly, that she was not handsome or rich enough for him, and he could not marry her, he would deserve to be kicked for his ill manners; yet no less is implied in the fact, that having access and opportunity of putting the question to her, he has never yet thought fit to do it. The young woman understands this as clearly as if it were put into words: but no reasonable young woman would think of making this the ground of a quarrel. Just as little right have a married couple to tell me by speeches, and looks that are scarce less plain than speeches, that I am not the happy man, — the lady's choice. It is enough that I know I am not; I do not want this perpetual reminding.

The display of superior knowledge or riches may be made sufficiently mortifying; but these admit of a palliative. The knowledge which is brought out to insult me, may accidently improve me; and in the rich man's houses and pictures, — his parks and gardens, I have a temporary usufruct at least. But the display of married happiness has none of these palliatives; it is throughout pure, unrecompensed, unqualified insult.

Marriage by its best title is a monopoly, and not of the least invidious sort. It is the cunning of most possessors of any exclusive privilege to keep their advantage as much out of sight as possible, that their less favoured neighbours, seeing little of the benefit, may the less be disposed to question the right. But these married monopolists thrust the most obnoxious part of their patent into our faces.

Nothing is to me more distasteful than that entire complacency and satisfaction which beam in the countenances of a new married

couple, — in that of the lady particularly: it tells you, that her lot is disposed of in this world; that *you* can have no hopes of her. It is true, I have none; nor wishes either, perhaps: but this is one of those truths which ought, as I said before, to be taken for granted, not expressed.

The excessive airs which those people give themselves, founded on the ignorance of us unmarried people, would be more offensive if they were less irrational. We will allow them to understand the mysteries belonging to their own craft better than we who have not had the happiness to be made free of the company: but their arrogance is not content within these limits. If a single person presume to offer his opinion in their presence, though upon the most indifferent subject, he is immediately silenced as an incompetent person. Nay, a young married lady of my acquaintance, who, the best of the jest was, had not changed her condition above a fortnight before, in a question on which I had the misfortune to differ from her, respecting the properest mode of breeding oysters for the London market, had the assurance to ask, with a sneer, how such an old Bachelor as I could pretend to know anything about such matters.

But what I have spoken of hitherto is nothing to the airs which these creatures give themselves when they come, as they generally do, to have children. When I consider how little of a rarity children are, — that every street and blind alley swarms with them, — that the poorest people commonly have them in most abundance, — that there are few marriages that are not blest with at least one of these bargains, — how often they turn out ill, and defeat the fond hopes of their parents, taking to vicious courses, which end in poverty, disgrace, the gallows, &c. — I cannot for my life tell what cause for pride there can possibly be in having them. If they were young phœnixes, indeed, that were born but one in a year, there might be a pretext. But when they are so common —

I do not advert to the insolent merit which they assume with their husbands on these occasions. Let them look to that. But why *we*, who are not their natural-born subjects, should be expected

to bring our spices, myrrh, and incense, — our tribute and homage of admiration, — I do not see.

"Like as the arrows in the hand of the giant, even so are the young children"; so says the excellent office in our Prayer-book appointed for the churching of women. "Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them": so say I; but then don't let him discharge his quiver upon us that are weaponless; — let them be arrows, but not to gall and stick us. I have generally observed that these arrows are double-headed: they have two forks, to be sure to hit with one or the other. As for instance, where you come into a house which is full of children, if you happen to take no notice of them (you are thinking of something else, perhaps, and turn a deaf ear to their innocent caresses), you are set down as untractable, morose, a hater of children. On the other hand, if you find them more than usually engaging, if you are taken with their pretty manners, and set about in earnest to romp and play with them, some pretext or other is sure to be found for sending them out of the room: they are too noisy or boisterous, or Mr. —— does not like children. With one or other of these forks the arrow is sure to hit you.

I could forgive their jealousy, and dispense with toying with their brats, if it gives them pain; but I think it unreasonable to be called upon to *love* them, where I see no occasion, — to love a whole family, perhaps, eight, nine, or ten, indiscriminately, — to love all the pretty dears, because children are so engaging.

I know there is a proverb, "Love me, love my dog";[9] that is not always so very practicable, particularly if the dog be set upon you to tease you or snap at you in sport. But a dog, or a lesser thing, — any inanimate substance, as a keepsake, a watch or a ring, a tree, or the place where we last parted when my friend went away upon a long absence, I can make shift to love, because I love him, and anything that reminds me of him; provided it be in its nature indifferent, and apt to receive whatever hue fancy can give it. But children have a real character and essential being of

[9] See Lamb's *Popular Fallacies*, No. X.

themselves: they are amiable or unamiable *per se;* I must love or hate them as I see cause for either in their qualities. A child's nature is too serious a thing to admit of its being regarded as a mere appendage to another being, and to be loved or hated accordingly: they stand with me upon their own stock, as much as men and women do. O! but you will say, sure it is an attractive age, — there is something in the tender years of infancy that of itself charms us. That is the very reason why I am more nice about them. I know that a sweet child is the sweetest thing in nature, not even excepting the delicate creatures which bear them; but the prettier the kind of a thing is, the more desirable it is that it should be pretty of its kind. One daisy differs not much from another in glory; but a violet should look and smell the daintiest. — I was always rather squeamish in my women and children.

But this is not the worst: one must be admitted into their familiarity, at least, before they can complain of inattention. It implies visits, and some kind of intercourse. But if the husband be a man with whom you have lived on a friendly footing before marriage, — if you did not come in on the wife's side, — if you did not sneak into the house in her train, but were an old friend in fast habits of intimacy before their courtship was so much as thought on, — look about you — your tenure is precarious — before a twelvemonth shall roll over your head, you shall find your old friend gradually grow cool and altered towards you, and at last seek opportunities of breaking with you. I have scarce a married friend of my acquaintance, upon whose firm faith I can rely, whose friendship did not commence *after the period of his marriage.* With some limitations they can endure that: but that the good man should have dared to enter into a solemn league of friendship in which they were not consulted, though it happened before they knew him,— before they that are now man and wife ever met, — this is intolerable to them. Every long friendship, every old authentic intimacy, must be brought into their office to be new stamped with their currency, as a sovereign Prince calls in the good old money that was coined in some reign before he was born or thought

of, to be new marked and minted with the stamp of his authority, before he will let it pass current in the world. You may guess what luck generally befalls such a rusty piece of metal as I am in these *new mintings*.

Innumerable are the ways which they take to insult and worm you out of their husband's confidence. Laughing at all you say with a kind of wonder, as if you were a queer kind of fellow that said good things, *but an oddity*, is one of the ways; — they have a particular kind of stare for the purpose; — till at last the husband, who used to defer to your judgment, and would pass over some excrescences of understanding and manner for the sake of a general vein of observation (not quite vulgar) which he perceived in you, begins to suspect whether you are not altogether a humourist, — a fellow well enough to have consorted with in his bachelor days, but not quite so proper to be introduced to ladies. This may be called the staring way; and is that which has oftenest been put in practice against me.

Then there is the exaggerating way, or the way of irony: that is, where they find you an object of especial regard with their husband, who is not so easily to be shaken from the lasting attachment founded on esteem, which he has conceived towards you, by never-qualified exaggerations to cry up all that you say or do, till the good man, who understands well enough that it is all done in compliment to him, grows weary of the debt of gratitude which is due to so much candour, and by relaxing a little on his part, and taking down a peg or two in his enthusiasm, sinks at length to that kindly level of moderate esteem, — that "decent affection and complacent kindness" towards you, where she herself can join in sympathy with him without much stretch and violence to her sincerity.

Another way (for the ways they have to accomplish so desirable a purpose are infinite) is, with a kind of innocent simplicity, continually to mistake what it was which first made their husband fond of you. If an esteem for something excellent in your moral character was that which riveted the chain which she is to break,

upon any imaginary discovery of a want of poignancy in your conversation, she will cry, "I thought, my dear, you described your friend, Mr. ——, as a great wit." If, on the other hand, it was for some supposed charm in your conversation that he first grew to like you, and was content for this to overlook some trifling irregularities in your moral deportment, upon the first notice of any of these she as readily exclaims, "This, my dear, is your good Mr. ——." One good lady, whom I took the liberty of expostulating with for not showing me quite so much respect as I thought due to her husband's old friend, had the candour to confess to me that she had often heard Mr. —— speak of me before marriage, and that she had conceived a great desire to be acquainted with me, but that the sight of me had very much disappointed her expectations; for from her husband's representations of me, she had formed a notion that she was to see a fine, tall, officer-looking man (I use her very words); the very reverse of which proved to be the truth. This was candid; and I had the civility not to ask her in return, how she came to pitch upon a standard of personal accomplishments for her husband's friends which differed so much from his own; for my friend's dimensions as near as possible approximate to mine; he standing five feet five in his shoes, in which I have the advantage of him by about half an inch; and he no more than myself exhibiting any indications of a martial character in his air or countenance.

These are some of the mortifications which I have encountered in the absurd attempt to visit at their houses. To enumerate them all would be a vain endeavour: I shall therefore just glance at the very common impropriety of which married ladies are guilty, — of treating us as if we were their husbands, and *vice versâ*. I mean, when they use us with familiarity, and their husbands with ceremony. *Testacea*, for instance, kept me the other night two or three hours beyond my usual time of supping, while she was fretting because Mr. —— did not come home till the oysters were all spoiled, rather than she would be guilty of the impoliteness of touching one in his absence. This was reversing the point of good

manners: for ceremony is an invention to take off the uneasy feeling which we derive from knowing ourselves to be less the object of love and esteem with a fellow-creature than some other person is. It endeavours to make up, by superior attentions in little points, for that invidious preference which it is forced to deny in the greater. Had *Testacea* kept the oysters back for me, and withstood her husband's importunities to go to supper, she would have acted according to the strict rules of propriety. I know no ceremony that ladies are bound to observe to their husbands, beyond the point of a modest behaviour and decorum: therefore I must protest against the vicarious gluttony of *Cerasia*, who at her own table sent away a dish of Morellas, which I was applying to with great good will, to her husband at the other end of the table, and recommended a plate of less extraordinary gooseberries to my unwedded palate in their stead. Neither can I excuse the wanton affront of ——.

But I am weary of stringing up all my married acquaintance by Roman denominations. Let them amend and change their manners, or I promise to record the full-length English of their names to the terror of all such desperate offenders in future.

3. The Genteel Style in Writing.[10]

It is an ordinary criticism, that my Lord Shaftesbury,[11] and Sir William Temple, are models of the genteel style in writing. We should prefer saying — of the lordly, and the gentlemanly. Nothing can be more unlike than the inflated finical rhapsodies of Shaftesbury, and the plain natural chit-chat of Temple. The man

[10] From *The New Monthly Magazine*, March, 1826. Printed among *The Last Essays of Elia*. — When this paper was originally published in the *New Monthly*, it appeared as the fourteenth of the *Popular Fallacies*, under the heading "That my Lord Shaftesbury and Sir William Temple are models of the Genteel Style of Writing." — Morley.

[11] Anthony Ashley Cooper, the third Earl of Shaftesbury, and author of the *Characteristics*.

of rank is discernible in both writers: but in the one it is only insinuated gracefully, in the other it stands out offensively. The peer seems to have written with his coronet on, and the Earl's mantle before him; the commoner in his elbow chair and undressed. — What can be more pleasant than the way in which the retired statesman peeps out in the essays, penned by the latter in his delightful retreat at Shene? They scent of Nimeguen, and the Hague. Scarce an authority is quoted under an ambassador. Don Francisco de Melo, a "Portugal Envoy in England," tells him it was frequent in his country for men, spent with age or other decays, so as they could not hope for above a year or two of life, to ship themselves away in a Brazil fleet, and after their arrival there to go on a great length, sometimes for twenty or thirty years, or more, by the force of that vigour they recovered with that remove. "Whether such an effect" (Temple beautifully adds) "might grow from the air, or the fruits of that climate, or by approaching nearer the sun, which is the fountain of light and heat, when their natural heat was so far decayed: or whether the piecing out of an old man's life were worth the pains; I cannot tell: perhaps the play is not worth the candle." — Monsieur Pompone, "French Ambassador in his (Sir William's) time at the Hague," certifies him, that in his life he had never heard of any man in France that arrived at a hundred years of age; a limitation of life which the old gentleman imputes to the excellence of their climate, giving them such a liveliness of temper and humour, as disposes them to more pleasures of all kinds than in other countries; and moralizes upon the matter very sensibly. The "late Robert Earl of Leicester" furnishes him with a story of a Countess of Desmond, married out of England in Edward the Fourth's time, and who lived far in King James's reign. The "same noble person" gives him an account, how such a year, in the same reign, there went about the country a set of morrice-dancers,[12] composed of ten men who danced, a Maid Marian, and

[12] See Douce's *Illustrations of Shakspeare*, Illustration III. p. 576, for an account of the morris-dance.

a tabor and pipe; and how these twelve, one with another, made up twelve hundred years. "It was not so much" (says Temple) "that so many in one small county (Herefordshire) should live to that age, as that they should be in vigour and in humour to travel and to dance." Monsieur Zulichem, one of his "colleagues at the Hague," informs him of a cure for the gout; which is confirmed by another "Envoy," Monsieur Serinchamps, in that town, who had tried it. — Old Prince Maurice of Nassau recommends to him the use of hammocks in that complaint; having been allured to sleep, while suffering under it himself, by the "constant motion or swinging of those airy beds." Count Egmont, and the Rhinegrave, who "was killed last summer before Maestricht," impart to him their experiences.

But the rank of the writer is never more innocently disclosed, than where he takes for granted the compliments paid by foreigners to his fruit-trees. For the taste and perfection of what we esteem the best, he can truly say, that the French, who have eaten his peaches and grapes at Shene in no very ill year, have generally concluded that the last are as good as any they have eaten in France on this side Fontainebleau; and the first as good as any they have eat in Gascony. Italians have agreed his white figs to be as good as any of that sort in Italy, which is the earlier kind of white fig there; for in the latter kind and the blue, we cannot come near the warm climates, no more than in the Frontignac or Muscat grape. His orange trees, too, are as large as any he saw when he was young in France, except those of Fontainebleau, or what he has seen in the Low Countries; except some very old ones of the Prince of Orange's. Of grapes he had the honour of bringing over four sorts into England, which he enumerates, and supposes that they are all by this time pretty common among some gardeners in his neighbourhood, as well as several persons of quality; for he ever thought all things of this kind "the commoner they are made the better." The garden pedantry with which he asserts that 'tis to little purpose to plant any of the best fruits, as peaches or grapes, hardly, he doubts, beyond Northamp-

tonshire at the farthest northwards; and praises the "Bishop of Munster at Cosevelt," for attempting nothing beyond cherries in that cold climate; is equally pleasant and in character. "I may perhaps" (he thus ends his sweet Garden Essay with a passage worthy of Cowley) "be allowed to know something of this trade, since I have so long allowed myself to be good for nothing else, which few men will do, or enjoy their gardens, without often looking abroad to see how other matters play, what motions in the state, and what invitations they may hope for into other scenes. For my own part, as the country life, and this part of it more particularly, were the inclination of my youth itself, so they are the pleasure of my age; and I can truly say that, among many great employments that have fallen to my share, I have never asked or sought for any of them, but have often endeavoured to escape from them, into the ease and freedom of a private scene, where a man may go his own way and his own pace, in the common paths and circles of life. The measure of choosing well is whether a man likes what he has chosen, which I thank God has befallen me; and though among the follies of my life, building and planting have not been the least, and have cost me more than I have the confidence to own; yet they have been fully recompensed by the sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat, where, since my resolution taken of never entering again into any public employments, I have passed five years without ever once going to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there always ready to receive me. Nor has this been any sort of affectation, as some have thought it, but a mere want of desire or humour to make so small a remove; for when I am in this corner, I can truly say with Horace, *Me quoties reficit*, &c.[13]

> "'Me when the cold Digentian stream revives,
> What does my friend believe I think or ask?
> Let me yet less possess, so I may live,
> Whate'er of life remains, unto myself.

[13] HORACE, *Epistles*, I. 18, 94–102.

> May I have books enough, and one year's store,
> Not to depend upon each doubtful hour:
> This is enough of mighty Jove to pray,
> Who, as he pleases, gives and takes away.' "

The writings of Temple are, in general, after this easy copy. On one occasion, indeed, his wit, which was mostly subordinate to nature and tenderness, has seduced him into a string of felicitous antitheses: which, it is obvious to remark, have been a model to Addison and succeeding essayists. "Who would not be covetous, and with reason," he says, "if health could be purchased with gold? who not ambitious if it were at the command of power, or restored by honour? but, alas! a white staff will not help gouty feet to walk better than a common cane; nor a blue riband bind up a wound so well as a fillet. The glitter of gold or of diamonds will but hurt sore eyes instead of curing them; and an aching head will be no more eased by wearing a crown, than a common night cap." In a far better style, and more accordance with his own humour of plainness, are the concluding sentences of his "Discourse upon Poetry." Temple took a part in the controversy about the ancient and the modern learning; and, with that partiality so natural and so graceful in an old man, whose state engagements had left him little leisure to look into modern productions, while his retirement gave him occasion to look back upon the classic studies of his youth — decided in favour of the latter. "Certain it is," he says, "that, whether the fierceness of the Gothic humours, or noise of their perpetual wars, frighted it away, or that the unequal mixture of the modern languages would not bear it — the great heights and excellency both of poetry and music fell with the Roman learning and empire, and have never since recovered the admiration and applauses that before attended them. Yet, such as they are amongst us, they must be confessed to be the softest and sweetest, the most general and most innocent amusements of common time and life. They still find room in the courts of princes, and the cottages of shepherds. They serve to revive and animate the dead calm of poor and idle lives, and to

allay or divert the violent passions and perturbations of the greatest and the busiest men. And both these effects are of equal use to human life; for the mind of man is like the sea, which is neither agreeable to the beholder nor the voyager, in a calm or in a storm, but is so to both when a little agitated by gentle gales; and so the mind, when moved by soft and easy passions or affections. I know very well that many who pretend to be wise by the forms of being grave, are apt to despise both poetry and music, as toys and trifles too light for the use or entertainment of serious men. But whoever find themselves wholly insensible to their charms, would, I think, do well to keep their own counsel, for fear of reproaching their own temper, and bringing the goodness of their natures, if not of their understandings, into question. While this world lasts, I doubt not but the pleasure and request of these two entertainments will do so too; and happy those that content themselves with these, or any other so easy and so innocent, and do not trouble the world or other men, because they cannot be quiet themselves, though nobody hurts them." "When all is done" (he concludes), "human life is at the greatest and the best but like a froward child, that must be played with, and humoured a little, to keep it quiet, till it falls asleep, and then the care is over." [14]

[14] Temple's four essays quoted by Lamb, namely, *Of Gardening*, *Of Health and Long Life*, *The Cure of the Gout by Moxa*, and *Of Poetry*, will be found in Vol. III. of his *Works*, London, 1814.

XXVIII.

ROBERT SOUTHEY.

(1774–1843.)

SELECTIONS FROM THE DOCTOR.

[Written about 1835.]

Chapter VI. P. I. — A Collection of Books none of which are Included amongst the Publications of any Society for the Promotion of Knowledge, Religious or Profane. — Happiness in Humble Life.

Happily for Daniel,[1] he lived before the age of Magazines, Reviews, Cyclopædias, Elegant Extracts, and Literary Newspapers, so that he gathered the fruit of knowledge for himself, instead of receiving it from the dirty fingers of a retail vender. His books were few in number, but they were all weighty either in matter or in size. They consisted of the Morte d'Arthur in the fine black-letter edition of Copeland; Plutarch's Morals and Pliny's Natural History, two goodly folios, full as an egg of meat, and both translated by that old worthy Philemon, who for the service which he rendered to his contemporaries and to his countrymen deserves to be called the best of the Hollands, without disparaging either the Lord or the Doctor of that appellation; the whole works of Joshua Sylvester (whose name, let me tell the reader in passing, was accented upon the first syllable by his contemporaries, not as now

[1] Daniel Dove, Sr., father of "The Doctor"; for, according to Southey, "Daniel, the son of Daniel Dove, and of Dinah his wife, was born near Ingleton, in the West Riding of Yorkshire, on Monday, the twenty-second of April, old style, 1723, nine minutes and three seconds after three in the afternoon."

upon the second); — Jean Petit's History of the Netherlands, translated and continued by Edward Grimestone, another worthy of the Philemon order; Sir Kenelm Digby's Discourses; Stowe's Chronicle; Joshua Barnes's Life of Edward III.; Ripley Revived, by Eirenæus Philalethes, an Englishman styling himself "Citizen of the World," with its mysterious frontispiece representing the *Domus Naturæ*, to which *Nil deest, nisi clavis*[2]; the Pilgrim's Progress; two volumes of Ozell's translation of Rabelais; Latimer's Sermons; and the last volume of Fox's Martyrs, which latter book had been brought him by his wife. The Pilgrim's Progress was a godmother's present to his son; the odd volumes of Rabelais he had picked up at Kendal at a sale, in a lot with Ripley Revived and the Plutarch's Morals: the others he had inherited.

Daniel had looked into all these books, read most of them, and believed all that he read, except Rabelais, which he could not tell what to make of. He was not, however, one of those persons who complacently suppose everything to be nonsense, which they do not perfectly comprehend, or flatter themselves that they do. His simple heart judged of books by what they ought to be, little knowing what they are. It never occurred to him that any thing would be printed which was not worth printing, any thing which did not convey either reasonable delight or useful instruction; and he was no more disposed to doubt the truth of what he read, than to question the veracity of his neighbour, or any one who had no interest in deceiving him. A book carried with it to him authority in its very aspect. The Morte d'Arthur therefore he received for authentic history just as he did the painful chronicle of honest John Stowe, and the Barnesian labours of Joshua the self-satisfied: there was nothing in it indeed which stirred his English blood like the battles of Cressy and Poictiers and Najara; yet on the whole he preferred it to Barnes's story, believed in Sir Tor, Sir Tristram, Sir Lancelot, and Sir Lamorack as entirely as in Sir John Chandos, the Capital de Buche and the Black Prince, and liked them better.

[2] the *House of Nature*, to which *nothing is wanting except a key.*

Latimer and Du Bartas[3] he used sometimes to read aloud on Sundays; and if the departed take cognizance of what passes on earth, and poets derive any satisfaction from the posthumous applause which is generally the only reward of those who deserve it, Sylvester might have found some compensation for the undeserved neglect into which his works had sunk, by the full and devout delight which his rattling rhymes and quaint collections afforded to this reader. The silver-tongued Sylvester, however, was reserved for a Sabbath-book; as a week-day author Daniel preferred Pliny, for the same reason that bread and cheese, or a rasher of hung mutton, contented his palate better than a syllabub. He frequently regretted that so knowing a writer had never seen or heard of Wethercote and Yordas caves, the ebbing and flowing spring at Giggleswick, Malham Cove, and Gordale Scar, that he might have described them among the wonders of the world. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*[4] is a maxim which will not in all cases hold good. There are things which we do not undervalue because we are familiar with them, but which are admired the more the more thoroughly they are known and understood; it is thus with the grand objects of nature and the finest works of art, with whatsoever is truly great and excellent. Daniel was not deficient in imagination; but no description of places which he had never seen, however exaggerated (as such things always are), impressed him so strongly as these objects in his own neighbourhood, which he had known from childhood. Three or four times in his life it had happened that strangers, with a curiosity as uncommon in that age as it is general in this, came from afar to visit these wonders of the West Riding, and Daniel accompanied them with a delight such as he never experienced on any other occasion.

But the Author in whom he delighted most was Plutarch, of whose works he was lucky enough to possess the worthier half: if the other had perished, Plutarch would not have been a popular writer, but he would have held a higher place in the estimation of

[3] *i.e.* Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas's "Divine Weeks and Works" (1598).

[4] *Everything unknown as wonderful.*

the judicious. Daniel could have posed a candidate for university honours, and perhaps the examiner too, with some of the odd learning which he had stored up in his memory from those great repositories of ancient knowledge. Refusing all reward for such services, the strangers to whom he officiated as a guide, though they perceived that he was an extraordinary person, were little aware how much information he had acquired and of how strange a kind. His talk with them did not go beyond the subjects which the scenes they came to visit naturally suggested, and they wondered more at the questions he asked, than at any thing which he advanced himself. For his disposition was naturally shy, and that which had been bashfulness in youth assumed the appearance of reserve as he advanced in life; for having none to communicate with upon his favourite studies, he lived in an intellectual world of his own, a mental solitude as complete as that of Alexander Selkirk or Robinson Crusoe. Even to the Curate his conversation, if he had touched upon his books, would have been heathen Greek; and to speak the truth plainly, without knowing a letter of that language, he knew more about the Greeks than nine-tenths of the clergy at that time, including all the dissenters, and than nine-tenths of the schoolmasters also.

Our good Daniel had none of that confidence which so usually and so unpleasantly characterizes self-taught men. In fact he was by no means aware of the extent of his acquirements, all that he knew in this kind having been acquired for amusement not for use. He had never attempted to teach himself anything. These books had lain in his way in boyhood, or fallen in it afterwards, and the perusal of them, intently as it was followed, was always accounted by him to be nothing more than recreation. None of his daily business had ever been neglected for it; he cultivated his fields and his garden, repaired his walls, looked to the stable, tended his cows and salved his sheep, as diligently and as contentedly as if he had possessed neither capacity nor inclination for any higher employments. Yet Daniel was one of those men, who, if disposition and aptitude were not over-ruled by circumstances,

would have grown pale with study, instead of being bronzed and hardened by sun and wind and rain. There were in him undeveloped talents which might have raised him to distinction as an antiquary, a virtuoso of the Royal Society, a poet, or a theologian, to whichever course the bias in his ball of fortune had inclined. But he had not a particle of envy in his composition. He thought indeed that if he had had grammar learning in his youth like the Curate, he would have made more use of it; but there was nothing either of the sourness or bitterness (call it which you please) of repining in this natural reflection.

Never indeed was any man more contented with doing his duty in that state of life to which it had pleased God to call him. And well he might do so, for no man ever passed through the world with less to disquiet or to sour him. Bred up in habits which secured the continuance of that humble but sure independence to which he was born, he had never known what it was to be anxious for the future. At the age of twenty-five he had brought home a wife, the daughter of a little landholder like himself, with fifteen pounds for her portion, and the true love of his youth proved to him a faithful helpmate in those years when the dream of life is over and we live in realities. If at any time there had been some alloy in his happiness, it was when there appeared reason to suppose that in him his family would be extinct; for though no man knows what parental feelings are till he has experienced them, and Daniel therefore knew not the whole value of that which he had never enjoyed, the desire of progeny is natural to the heart of man; and though Daniel had neither large estates, nor an illustrious name to transmit, it was an unwelcome thought that the little portion of the earth which had belonged to his fathers time out of mind, should pass into the possession of some stranger, who would tread on their graves and his own without any regard to the dust that lay beneath. That uneasy apprehension was removed after he had been married fifteen years, when to the great joy of both parents, because they had long ceased to entertain any hope of such an event, their wishes were fulfilled in the birth of a son. This their only child

was healthy, apt and docile, to all appearance as happily disposed in mind and body as a father's heart could wish. If they had fine weather for winning their hay or shearing their corn, they thanked God for it; if the season proved unfavourable, the labour was only a little the more and the crop a little the worse. Their stations secured them from want, and they had no wish beyond it. What more had Daniel to desire?[5]

Chapter IX. P. I. — Exceptions to one of King Solomon's Rules. — A Winter's Evening at Daniel's Fireside.

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, his feet will not depart from it." Generally speaking it will be found so; but is there any other rule to which there are so many exceptions?

Ask the serious Christian, as he calls himself, or the Professor (another and more fitting appellative which the Christian Pharisees have chosen for themselves) — ask him whether he has found it hold good? Whether his sons when they attained to years of discretion (which are the most indiscreet years in the course of human life) have profited as he expected by the long extemporaneous prayers to which they listened night and morning, the sad sabbaths which they were compelled to observe, and the soporific sermons which closed the domestic religiosities of those melancholy days? Ask him if this discipline has prevented them from running headlong into the follies and vices of the age? from being birdlimed by dissipation? or caught in the spider's web of sophistry and unbelief? "It is no doubt a true observation," says Bishop Patrick, "that the ready way to make the minds of youth grow awry, is to lace them too hard, by denying them their just freedom."

Ask the old faithful servant of Mammon, whom Mammon has rewarded to his heart's desire, and in whom the acquisition of riches has only increased his eagerness for acquiring more — ask

[5] Here follows a poetical passage from Du Bartas, a favourite one of Daniel's.

him whether he has succeeded in training up his heir to the same service? He will tell you that the young man is to be found upon race-grounds, and in gaming-houses; that he is taking his swing of extravagance and excess, and is on the high road to ruin.

Ask the wealthy Quaker, the pillar of the meeting — most orthodox in heterodoxy — who never wore a garment of forbidden cut or color, never bent his body in salutation, or his knees in prayer, — never uttered the heathen name of a day or month, nor ever addressed himself to any person without religiously speaking illegitimate English — ask him how it has happened that the tailor has converted his sons? He will fold his hands and twirl his thumbs mournfully in silence. It has not been for want of training them in the way wherein it was his wish that they should go.

You are about, Sir, to send your son to a public school: Eton or Westminster; Winchester or Harrow; Rugby or the Charter House, no matter which. He may come from either an accomplished scholar to the utmost extent that school education can make him so; he may be the better both for its discipline and its want of discipline; it may serve him excellently well as a preparatory school for the world into which he is about to enter. But also he may come away an empty coxcomb or a hardened brute — a spendthrift — a profligate — a blackguard or a sot.

To put a boy in the way he should go, is like sending out a ship well found, well manned, and stored, and with a careful captain; but there are rocks and shallows in her course, winds and currents to be encountered, and all the contingencies and perils of the sea.

How often has it been seen that sons, not otherwise deficient in duty toward their parents, have, in the most momentous concerns of life, taken the course most opposite to that in which they were trained to go, going wrong where the father would have directed them aright, or taking the right path in spite of all inducements and endeavours for leading them wrong! The son of Charles Wesley, born and bred in Methodism and bound to it by the strongest ties of pride and prejudice, became a papist. This indeed was but passing from one erroneous persuasion to another,

and a more inviting one. But Isaac Casaubon also had the grief of seeing a son seduced into the Romish superstition, and on the part of that great and excellent man, there had been no want of discretion in training him, nor of sound learning and sound wisdom. Archbishop Leighton, an honour to his church, his country, and his kind, was the child of one of those firebrands who kindled the Great Rebellion. And Franklin had a son, who, notwithstanding the example of his father (and such a father!), continued stedfast in his duty as a soldier and a subject; he took the unsuccessful side — but — *nunquam successu crescat honestum* [?][6] No such disappointment was destined to befal our Daniel. The way in which he trained up his son was that into which the bent of the boy's own nature would have led him; and all circumstances combined to favour the tendency of his education. The country abounding in natural objects of sublimity and beauty (some of these singular in their kind) might have impressed a duller imagination than had fallen to his lot; and that imagination had time enough for its workings during the solitary walks to and from school morning and evening. His home was in a lonely spot and having neither brother nor sister, nor neighbours near enough in any degree to supply their place as playmates, he became his father's companion imperceptibly as he ceased to be his fondling. And the effect was hardly less apparent in Daniel than in the boy. He was no longer the taciturn person as of yore; it seemed as if his tongue had been loosened, and when the reservoirs of his knowledge were opened, they flowed freely.

Their chimney corner on a winter's evening presented a group not unworthy of Sir Joshua's pencil. There sate Daniel, richer in marvellous stories than ever traveller who in the days of mendacity returned from the East; the peat fire shining upon a countenance which, weather-hardened as it was, might have given the painter a model for a Patriarch, so rare was the union which it exhibited of

[6] *Whether the honourable never prospers in the issue?* — LUCAN, *Pharsalia*, IX. 571. It is a question in Lucan dependent on 566: *Quid quaeri, Labiene, jubes? What do you bid to be sought?*

intelligence, benevolence, and simplicity. There sate the boy with open eyes and ears, raised head, and fallen lip, in all the happiness of wonder and implicit belief. There sate Dinah, not less proud of her husband's learning than of the towardly disposition and promising talents of her son, — twirling the thread at her spinning-wheel, but attending to all that past; and when there was a pause in the discourse, fetching a deep sigh, and exclaiming, "Lord bless us! what wonderful things there are in the world!" There also sate Haggy,[7] knitting stockings, and sharing in the comforts and enjoyments of the family when the day's work was done. And there sate William Dove; — but William must have a chapter to himself.

Chapter XXVI. P. I. — Daniel at Doncaster; the Reason Why He was destined for the Medical Profession, rather than Holy Orders; and some Remarks upon Sermons.

Fourteen years have elapsed since the scene took place which is related in the twenty-second chapter:[8] and Daniel the younger, at the time to which this present chapter refers, was residing at Doncaster with Peter Hopkins, who practised the medical art in all its branches. He had lived with him eight years, first as a pupil, latterly in the capacity of an assistant, and afterwards as an adopted successor.

How this connection between Daniel and Peter Hopkins was brought about, and the circumstances which prepared the way for it, would have appeared in some of the non-existent fourteen volumes, if it had pleased Fate that they should have been written.

Some of my readers, and especially those who pride themselves upon their knowledge of the world, or their success in it, will think it strange, perhaps, that the elder Daniel, when he resolved to make a scholar of his son, did not determine upon breeding him

[7] "Agatha the maid, or Haggy, as she was called."

[8] A series of quotations from Proverbs about Wisdom, repeated by Daniel the elder by way of instruction to Daniel the younger.

either to the Church or the Law, in either of which professions the way was easier and more inviting. Now though this will not appear strange to those other readers who have perceived that the father had no knowledge of the world, and could have none, it is nevertheless proper to enter into some explanation upon that point.

If George Herbert's Temple, or his Remains, or his Life by old Izaak Walton, had all or any of them happened to be among those few but precious books which Daniel prized so highly and used so well, it is likely that the wish of his heart would have been to train up his Son for a Priest to the Temple. But so it was that none of his reading was of a kind to give his thoughts that direction; and he had not conceived any exalted opinion of the Clergy from the specimens which had fallen in his way. A contempt which was but too general had been brought upon the Order by the ignorance or the poverty of a great proportion of its members. The person who served the humble church which Daniel dutifully attended was almost as poor as a Capuchine, and quite as ignorant. This poor man had obtained in evil hour from some easy or careless Bishop a licence to preach. It was reprehensible enough to have ordained one who was destitute of every qualification that the office requires; the fault was still greater in promoting him from the desk to the pulpit.

"A very great Scholar" is quoted by Dr. Eachard as saying, "that such preaching as is usual is a hindrance of salvation rather than the means to it." This was said when the fashion of conceited preaching, which is satirised in Frey Gerundio, had extended to England, and though that fashion has so long been obsolete, that many persons will be surprised to hear it had ever existed among us, it may still reasonably be questioned whether sermons, such as they commonly are, do not quench more devotion than they kindle.

My Lord! put not the book aside in displeasure! (I address myself to whatever Bishop may be reading it.) Unbiassed I will not call myself, for I am a true and orthodox churchman and have the interests of the Church zealously at heart, because I believe and

know them to be essentially and inseparably connected with those of the commonwealth. But I have been an attentive observer, and as such, request a hearing. Receive my remarks as coming from one whose principles are in entire accord with your Lordship's, whose wishes have the same scope and purport, and who, while he offers his honest opinion, submits it with proper humility to your judgment.

The founders of the English Church did not intend that the sermon should invariably form a part of the Sunday services. It became so in condescension to the Puritans, of whom it has long been the fashion to speak with respect instead of holding them up to the contempt and infamy and abhorrence which they have so richly merited. They have been extolled by their descendants and successors as models of patriotism and piety; and the success with which this delusion has been practised is one of the most remarkable examples of what may be effected by dint of effrontery and persevering falsehood.

That sentence I am certain will not be disapproved at Fulham or Lambeth. Dr. Southey, or Dr. Phillpots, might have written it.

The general standard of the Clergy has undoubtedly been very much raised since the days when they were not allowed to preach without a licence for that purpose from the Ordinary. Nevertheless it is certain that many persons who are in other and more material respects well, or even excellently, qualified for the ministerial functions, may be wanting in the qualifications for a preacher. A man may possess great learning, sound principles and good sense, and yet be without the talent of arranging and expressing his thoughts well in a written discourse: he may want the power of fixing the attention, or reaching the hearts of his hearers; and in that case the discourse, as some old writer has said in serious jest, which was designed for edification turns to *te*dification. The evil was less in Addison's days when he who distrusted his own abilities availed himself of the compositions of some approved Divine, and was not disparaged in the opinion of his congregation by taking a printed volume in the pulpit. This is no longer prac-

tised ; but instead of this, which secured wholesome instruction to the people, sermons are manufactured for sale, and sold in manuscript, or printed in a cursive type imitating manuscript. The articles which are prepared for such a market are, for the most part, copied from obscure books, with more or less alteration of language, and generally for the worse, and so far as they are drawn from such sources they are not likely to contain any thing exceptionable on the score of doctrine : but the best authors will not be resorted to, for fear of discovery, and therefore when these are used, the congregation lose as much in point of instruction, as he who uses them ought to lose in self-esteem.

But it is more injurious when a more scrupulous man composes his own discourses, if he be deficient either in judgment or learning. He is then more likely to entangle plain texts than to unravel knotty ones ; rash positions are sometimes advanced by such preachers, unsound arguments are adduced by them in support of momentous doctrines, and though these things neither offend the ignorant and careless, nor injure the well-minded and well-informed, they carry poison with them when they enter a diseased ear. It cannot be doubted that such sermons act as corroboratives for infidelity.

Nor when they contain nothing that is actually erroneous, but are merely unimproving, are they in that case altogether harmless. They are not harmless if they are felt to be tedious. They are not harmless if they torpify the understanding : a chill that begins there may extend to the vital regions. Bishop Taylor (the great Jeremy) says of devotional books, that " they are in a large degree the occasion of so great indevotion as prevails among the generality of nominal Christians, being," he says, " represented naked in the conclusions of spiritual life, without or art or learning ; and made apt for persons who can do nothing but believe and love, not for them that can consider and love." This applies more forcibly to bad sermons than to common-place books of devotion ; the book may be laid aside if it offend the reader's judgment, but the sermon is a positive infliction upon the helpless hearers.

The same Bishop, — and his name ought to carry with it authority among the wise and the good — has delivered an opinion upon this subject, in his admirable Apology for Authorized and Set Forms of Liturgy. "Indeed," he says, "if I may freely declare my opinion, I think it were not amiss, if the liberty of making sermons were something more restrained than it is; and that such persons only were entrusted with the liberty, for whom the church herself may safely be responsive, — that is, men learned and pious; and that the other part, the *vulgus cleri*, should instruct the people out of the fountains of the church and the public stock, till by so long exercise and discipline in the schools of the Prophets they may also be intrusted to minister of their own unto the people. This I am sure was the practice of the Primitive Church."

"I am convinced," said Dr. Johnson, "that I ought to be at Divine Service more frequently than I am; but the provocations given by ignorant and affected preachers too often disturb the mental calm which otherwise would succeed to prayer. I am apt to whisper to myself on such occasions, 'How can this illiterate fellow dream of fixing attention, after we have been listening to the sublimest truths, conveyed in the most chaste and exalted language, through a liturgy which must be regarded as the genuine offspring of piety impregnated by wisdom!'" — "Take notice, however," he adds, "though I make this confession respecting myself, I do not mean to recommend the fastidiousness that sometimes leads me to exchange congregational for solitary worship."

The saintly Herbert says,

> "Judge not the Preacher, for he is thy Judge;
> If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
> God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
> To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.
> The worst speak something good. If all want sense,
> God takes a text and preacheth patience.
>
> He that gets patience and the blessing which
> Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains."

This sort of patience was all that Daniel could have derived from the discourses of the poor curate; and it was a lesson of which his meek and benign temper stood in no need. Nature had endowed him with this virtue, and this Sunday's discipline exercised without strengthening it. While he was, in the phrase of the Religious Public, *sitting under* the preacher, he obeyed to a certain extent George Herbert's precept, — that is, he obeyed it as he did other laws with the existence of which he was unacquainted, —

> "Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part;
> Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasure thither."

Pleasure made no part of his speculations at any time. Plots he had none. For the Plough, — it was what he never followed in fancy, patiently as he plodded after the furrow in his own vocation. And then for worldly thoughts, they were not likely in that place to enter a mind which never at any time entertained them. But to that sort of thought (if thought it may be called) which cometh as it listeth, and which, when the mind is at ease and the body in health, is the forerunner and usher of sleep, he certainly gave way. The curate's voice passed over his ear like the sound of the brook with which it blended, and it conveyed to him as little meaning and less feeling. During the sermon, therefore, he retired into himself, with as much or as little edification as a Quaker finds at a silent meeting.

It happened also that of the few clergy within the very narrow circle in which Daniel moved, some were in no good repute for their conduct, and none displayed either that zeal in the discharge of their pastoral functions, or that earnestness and ability in performing the service of the Church, which are necessary for commanding the respect and securing the affections of the parishioners. The clerical profession had never presented itself to him in its best, which is really its true light; and for that cause he would never have thought of it for the boy, even if the means of putting him forward in this path had been easier and more obvious than

they were. And for the dissenting ministry, Daniel liked not the name of a Nonconformist. The Puritans had left behind them an ill savour in his part of the country, as they had done every where else; and the extravagances of the primitive Quakers, which during his childhood were fresh in remembrance, had not yet been forgotten.

It was well remembered in those parts that the Vicar of Kirkby Lonsdale, through the malignity of some of his puritanical parishioners, had been taken out of his bed . . . , and hurried away to Lancaster jail, where he was imprisoned three years for no other offence than that of fidelity to his Church and his King. And that the man who was the chief instigator of this persecution, and had enriched himself by the spoil of his neighbour's goods, though he flourished for awhile, bought a field and built a fine house, came to poverty at last, and died in prison, having for some time received his daily food there from the table of one of this very Vicar's sons. It was well remembered also that, in a parish of the adjoining county-palatine, the puritanical party had set fire in the night to the Rector's barns, stable, and parsonage; and that he and his wife and children had only as it were by miracle escaped from the flames.

William Dove had also among his traditional stores some stories of a stranger kind concerning the Quakers, these parts of the North having been a great scene of their vagaries in their early days. He used to relate how one of them went into the church at Brough, during the reign of the Puritans, with a white sheet about his body, and a rope about his neck, to prophesy before the people and their Whig Priest (as he called him) that the surplice which was then prohibited should again come into use, and that the Gallows should have its due! And how when their ringleader, George Fox, was put in prison at Carlisle, the wife of Justice Benson would eat no meat unless she partook it with him at the bars of his dungeon, declaring she was moved to do this; wherefore it was supposed he had bewitched her. And not without reason; for when this old George went, as he often did, into the Church to

disturb the people, and they thrust him out, and fell upon him and beat him, sparing neither sticks nor stones if they came to hand, he was presently, for all that they had done to him, as sound and as fresh as if nothing had touched him; and when they tried to kill him, they could not take away his life! And how this old George rode a great black horse, upon which he was seen in the course of the same hour at two places, three score miles distant from each other! And how some of the women who followed this old George used to strip off all their clothes, and in that plight go into the church at service time on the Sunday, to bear testimony against the pomps and vanities of the world; "and to be sure" said William, "they must have been witched, or they never would have done this." "Lord deliver us!" said Dinah, "to be sure they must!" — "To be sure they must, Lord bless us all!" said Haggy.

INTERCHAPTER V. — WHEREIN THE AUTHOR MAKES KNOWN HIS GOOD INTENTIONS TO ALL READERS, AND OFFERS GOOD ADVICE TO SOME OF THEM.

Reader, my compliments to you!

This is a form of courtesy which the Turks use in their compositions, and being so courteous a form, I have here adopted it. Why not?

Turks though they are, we learnt inoculation from them, and the use of coffee; and hitherto we have taught them nothing but the use of tobacco in return.

Reader, my compliments to you!

Why is it that we hear no more of Gentle Readers? Is it that having become critical in this age of Magazines and Reviews, they have ceased to be gentle? But all are not critical;

> "The baleful dregs
> Of these late ages, — that Circean draught
> Of servitude and folly, have not yet, —
> Yet have not so dishonour'd, so deform'd
> The native judgment of the human soul." — AKENSIDE.

In thus applying these lines I mean the servitude to which any rational man degrades his intellect, when he submits to receive an opinion from the dictation of another, upon a point whereon he is just as capable of judging for himself; — the intellectual servitude of being told by Mr. A., B., or C. whether he is to like a book or not, — or why he is to like it: and the folly of supposing that the man who writes anonymously, is on that very account entitled to more credit for judgment, erudition, and integrity, than the author who comes forward in his own person, and stakes his character upon what he advances.

All Readers, however, — thank Heaven, and what is left among us of that best and rarest of all senses called Common Sense, — all Readers, however, are not critical. There are still some who are willing to be pleased, and thankful for being pleased; and who do not think it necessary that they should be able to *parse* their pleasure, like a lesson, and give a rule or a reason why they are pleased, or why they ought not to be pleased. There are still readers who have never read an Essay upon Taste; — and if they take my advice, they never will; for they can no more improve their taste by so doing, than they could improve their appetite or their digestion by studying a cookery-book. I have something to say to all classes of Readers; and, therefore, having thus begun to speak of one, with that class I will proceed. It is to the youthful part of my lectors — (why not lectors as well as auditors?) it is *virginibus puerisque* that I now address myself. Young Readers, you whose hearts are open, whose understandings are not yet hardened, and whose feelings are neither exhausted nor encrusted by the world, take from me a better rule than any professors of criticism will teach you!

Would you know whether the tendency of a book is good or evil, examine in what state of mind you lay it down. Has it induced you to suspect that what you have been accustomed to think unlawful may after all be innocent, and that that may be harmless which you have hitherto been taught to think dangerous? Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and impatient under the

control of others; and disposed you to relax in that self-government, without which both the law of God and man tell us there can be no virtue — and consequently no happiness? Has it attempted to abate your admiration and reverence for what is great and good, and to diminish in you the love of your country and your fellow-citizens? Has it addressed itself to your pride, your vanity, your selfishness, or any other of your evil propensities? Has it defiled the imagination with what is loathsome, and shocked the heart with what is monstrous? Has it disturbed the sense of right and wrong which the Creator has implanted in the human soul? If so — if you are conscious of all or any of these effects, — or if, having escaped from all, you have felt that such were the effects it was intended to produce, throw the book in the fire, whatever name it may bear in the title-page! Throw it in the fire, young man, though it should have been the gift of a friend! — young lady, away with the whole set, though it should be the prominent feature of a rosewood bookcase!

XXIX.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

(1775–1864.)

DIALOGUES OF LITERARY MEN.

[Written about 1824.]

Samuel Johnson and John Horne (Tooke).[1]

Tooke. Doctor Johnson, I rejoice in the opportunity, late as it presents itself, of congratulating you on the completion of your great undertaking; my bookseller sent me your *Dictionary* the day it came from the press, and it has exercised ever since a good part of my time and attention.

Johnson. Who are you, sir?

Tooke. My name is Horne.

Johnson. What is my *Dictionary*, sir, to you?

Tooke. A treasure.

Johnson. Keep it then at home and to yourself, sir; as you would any other treasure, and talk no more about it than you would about that. You have picked up some knowledge, sir; but out of dirty places. What man in his senses would fix his study on the hustings? When a gentleman takes it into his head to conciliate the rabble, I deny his discretion and I doubt his honesty. Sir, what can you have to say to me?

Tooke. Doctor, my studies have led me some little way into etymology, and I am interested in whatever contributes to the right knowledge of our language.

[1] "J. Horne assumed the name of Tooke after the supposed date of this Conversation."

Johnson. Sir, have you read our old authors?

Tooke. Almost all of them that are printed and extant.

Johnson. Prodigious! do you speak truth?

Tooke. To the best of my belief.

Johnson. Sir, how could you, a firebrand tossed about by the populace, find leisure for so much reading?

Tooke. The number of English books printed before the accession of James the First is smaller than you appear to imagine; and the manuscripts, I believe, are not numerous; certainly in the libraries of our Universities they are scanty. I wish you had traced in your preface all the changes made in the orthography these last three centuries, for which five additional pages would have been sufficient. The first attempt to purify and reform the tongue was made by John Lyly, in a book entitled *Euphues and his England*,[2] and a most fantastical piece of fustian it is. This author has often been confounded with William Lily, a better grammarian, and better known. Benjamin Jonson did somewhat, and could have done more. Although our governors have taken no pains either to improve our language or to extend it, none in Europe is spoken habitually by so many. The French boast the universality of theirs: yet the Germans, the Spaniards, and the Italians may contend with them on this ground: for as the Dutch is a dialect of the German, so is the Portuguese of the Spanish, and not varying in more original words than the Milanese and Neapolitan from the Tuscan. The *lingua franca*, which pervades the coasts of the Mediterranean, the Ionian, and the Ægean seas, is essentially Italian. The languages of the two most extensive empires in Europe are confined to the fewest people. There are not thirteen millions who speak Turkish, nor fifteen who speak Russian, though branches of the Slavonic are scattered far. If any respect had been had to the literary glory of our country, whereon much of its political is and ever will be dependent, many millions more would at this time be speaking in English; and the Irish,

[2] See the first Selection in this volume.

the Welsh, and the Canadians, like the Danes and Saxons, would have forgotten they were conquered people.

We should be anxious both to improve our language and to extend it. England ought to have no colony in which it will not be soon the only one spoken. Nations may be united by identity of speech more easily than by identity of laws: for identity of laws only shows the conquered that they are bound *to* another people, while identity of speech shows them that they are bound *with* it. There is no firm conjunction but this; none that does not retain on it the scar and seam, and often with much soreness.

Johnson. So far, I believe, I may agree with you, and remain a good subject.

Tooke. Let us now descend from generalities to particulars. Our spelling has undergone as many changes as the French, and more.

Johnson. And because it hath undergone many, you would make it undergo more! There is a fastidiousness in the use of language that indicates an atrophy of mind. We must take words as the world presents them to us, without looking at the root. If we grubbed under this and laid it bare, we should leave no room for our thoughts to lie evenly, and every expression would be constrained and crampt. We should scarcely find a metaphor in the purest author that is not false or imperfect, nor could we imagine one ourselves that would not be stiff and frigid. Take now for instance a phrase in common use. *You are rather late.* Can anything seem plainer? Yet *rather*, as you know, meant originally *earlier*, being the comparative of *rathe;* the "rathe primrose" of the poet[3] recalls it. We cannot say, *You are sooner late:* but who is so troublesome and silly as to question the propriety of saying, *You are rather late?* We likewise say, *bad orthography* and *false orthography:* how can there be false or bad *right-spelling?*

Tooke. I suspect there are more of these inadvertencies in our language than in any other.

[3] From MILTON'S *Lycidas*, 142.

Johnson. Sir, our language is a very good language.

Tooke. Were it not, I should be less solicitous to make it better.

Johnson. *You* make it better, sir!

Tooke. By reverencing the authority of the learned, by exposing the corruptions of the ignorant, and by reclaiming what never ought to have been obsolete.

Johnson. Sir, the task is hopeless: little can be done now.

Tooke. And because little can be done, must we do nothing? Because with all our efforts we are imperfect, may not we try to be virtuous? Many of the anomalies in our language can be avoided or corrected: if many shall yet remain, something at least will have been done for elegance and uniformity.

Johnson. I hate your innovations.

Tooke. I not only hate them, but would resist and reject them, if I could. It is only such writers as you that can influence the public by your authority and example.

Johnson. Sir, if the best writer in England dared to spell three words differently from his contemporaries, and as Milton spent [spelt] them, he would look about in vain for a publisher.

Tooke. Yet Milton is most careful and exact in his spelling, and his ear is as correct as his learning. His language would continue to be the language of his country, had it not been for the Restoration.

Johnson. I have patience, sir! I have patience, sir! Pray go on.

Tooke. I will take advantage of so much affability; and I hope that patience, like other virtues, may improve by exercise.

On the return of Charles from the Continent, some of his followers may really have lost their native idiom, or at least may have forgotten the graver and solider parts of it; for many were taken over in their childhood. On their return to England, nothing gave such an air of fashion as imperfection in English: it proved high breeding, it displayed the court and loyalty. Home-bred English ladies soon acquired it from their noble and brave gallants; and it became the language of the Parliament, of the

Church, and of the Stage. Between the last two places was pretty equally distributed all the facetiousness left among us.

Johnson. Keep clear of the church, sir, and stick to language.

Tooke. Punctually will I obey each of your commands.

Johnson. Did South and Cowley and Waller fall into this slough?

Tooke. They could not keep others from it. I peruse their works with pleasure: but South, the greatest of them, is negligent and courtly in his spelling, and sometimes, although not often, more gravely incorrect.

Johnson. And pray now what language do you like?

Tooke. The best in all countries is that which is spoken by intelligent women of too high rank for petty affectation, and too much request in society for deep study. Cicero praises more than one such among the Romans; the number was greater among the Greeks. We have no writer in our language so pure as Madame de Sévigné. Indeed we must acknowledge that the French far excell us in purity of style. When have we seen, or when can we expect, such a writer as Le Sage? In our days there is scarcely an instance of a learned or unlearned man who has written gracefully, excepting your friend Goldsmith and (if your modesty will admit my approaches) yourself. In your *Lives of the Poets*, you have laid aside the sceptre of Jupiter for the wand of Mercury, and have really called up with it some miserable ghosts from the dead.

Johnson. Sir, I desire no compliments.

Tooke. Before, I offered not my compliment but my tribute; I dreaded a repulse; but I little expected to see, as I do, the finger of Aurora on your face.

Johnson. If the warmth of the room is enough to kindle your poetry, well may it possess a slight influence on my cheek. The learned men, I presume, are superseded by your public orators.

Tooke. Our parliamentary speakers of most eminence are superficial in scholarship, as we understand the word, and by no means dangerously laden with any species of knowledge. Burke is the most eloquent and philosophical of them; Fox the readiest at reply, the stoutest debater, the acutest disputant.

Johnson. Rebels! but what you say of their knowledge is the truth. I have said it of one party, and I know it of the other, else I would trounce you for your asseveration.

Tooke. You yourself induced me to make the greater part of my remarks; more important, as being on things more important, than transitory men; such is language.

Johnson. How, sir, did I?

Tooke. By having recommended in some few instances a correcter mode of spelling. Bentley and Hall and Dryden, though sound writers, are deficient in authority with me; when, for example, they write *incompatible* for *incompetible:* we want both words, but we must be careful not to confound and misapply them. Dryden and Roscommon formed a design of purifying and fixing the language: neither of them knew its origin or principles, or was intimately or indeed moderately versed in our earlier authors, of whom Chaucer was probably the only one they had perused. It is pretended that they abandoned the design from the unquietness of the times: as if the times disturbed them in their studies, leaving them peace enough for poetry, but not enough for philology.

Johnson. And are you, sir, more acute, more learned, or more profound? What! because at one time our English books were scanty, you would oppose the scanty to the many, with all the rashness and inconsistency of a republican.

Tooke. Bearing all your reproofs and reproaches with equanimity and submission, I converse with you on this subject because you have given up much time to it: with another I should decline the discussion. I am hopeful of gaining some information and of suggesting some subject for inquiry. Illiterate, inconsiderate, irreverent, and overweening men will be always disregarded by me. Like children and clowns, if they see a throne or a judgment-seat, they must forsooth sit down in it. Such people set themselves above me, and enjoy the same feelings as those in the one-shilling gallery who look down on Garrick. He is only on the stage, no higher than the footlights, and plays only for others;

whereas they have placed themselves at the summit, and applaud and condemn to please their fancies. It is equitable that coarse impudence should be met with calm contempt, and that Wisdom should sit down and lower her eyes, when Impudence trips over the way to discountenance her, or Ignorance starts up to teach her.

Johnson. Coxcombs and blockheads always have been, and always will be innovators; some in dress, some in polity, some in language.

Tooke. I wonder whether they invented the choice appellations you have just repeated.

Johnson. No, sir! Indignant wise men invented them.

Tooke. Long ago then. Indignant wise men lived in the time of the Centaurs; such combinations have never existed since. Your remark, however, on the introducers of new words into our language, is, I apprehend, well-founded: but you spoke generally and absolutely, and in this (I think) incorrectly. Julius Cæsar, whom you ought to love and reverence for giving the last blow to a republic, was likewise an innovator in spelling; so was Virgil; and to such a degree, that, Aulus Gellius tells us, he spelled the same word differently in different places, to gratify his ear. Milton has done the same.

Johnson. And sometimes injudiciously: for instance in writing *Hee* emphatically, *He* less so. He also writes *subtile*, as a scholar should do; and *suttle*, as the word is pronounced by the most vulgar.

Tooke. Cicero, not contented with new spellings, created new words. Now the three Romans have immemorially been considered the most elegant and careful writers in their language: and we confer on our countryman but a small portion of the praises due to him, in asserting that both in poetry and prose his mastery is above them all.

Milton is no factitious or accrete[4] man; no pleader, no rhetorician. Truth in him is the parent of Energy, and Energy the sup-

[4] made up.

porter of Truth. If we rise to the Greek language, the most eloquent man on record, Pericles, introduced the double T instead of the double S: and it was enamelled on that golden language to adorn the eloquence of Aspasia, and to shine among the graces of Alcibiades. Socrates bent his thoughtful head over it, and it was observed in the majestic march of Plato. At the same time Thucydides and the tragedians, together with Aristophanes, contributed to form, or united to countenance, the *Middle Attic*. One would expect that Elegance and Atticism herself might have rested and been contented. No: Xenophon, Plato, Æschines, Demosthenes, were promoters of the *New Attic*, altering and softening many words in the spelling. With such men before me, I think it to be deeply regretted that coxcombs and blockheads should be our only teachers, where we have much to learn, much to obliterate, and much to mend.

Johnson. Follow your betters, sir!

Tooke. Such is my intention: and it is also my intention that others shall follow theirs.

Johnson. Obey the majority, according to your own principles. You reformers will let nothing be great, nothing be stabile. The orators you mention were deluders of the populace.

Tooke. And so were the poets, no doubt: but let us hope that the philosophers and moralists were not, nor indeed the writers of comedy. Menander was among the reformers: so was Plautus at Rome: the most highly estimated for his rich Latinity by Cicero and all the learned. Our own language had, under the translators of the Bible and of the Liturgy, reached the same pitch as the Latin had in the time of Plautus; and the sanctitude of Milton's genius gave it support, until the worst of French invasions overthrew it. Cowley, Sprat, Dryden, imported a trimmer and succincter dress, stripping the ampler of its pearls and bullion. Arbuthnot and Steele and Swift and Addison added no weight or precision to the language, nor were they choice in the application of words. None of them came up to their French contemporaries in purity and correctness; and their successors, who are more

grammatical, are weak competitors with the rival nation for those compact and beautiful possessions. De Foe has a greater variety of powers than they, and he far outstrips in vigour and vivacity all the other pedestrians who started with him. He spells some words commendably, others not. Of the former are *onely*, *admitt*, *referr*, *supplie*, *relie*, *searcht*, *wisht;* of the latter *perticulars*, *perusall*, *speciall*, *vallues*. Hurd, very minute and fastidious, in like manner writes often reprehensibly, though oftener well. Do you tolerate his "*catched*."

Johnson. Sir, I was *teached* better.

Tooke. He also writes "under these circumstances."

Johnson. Circumstances are things *round about;* we are *in* them, not *under* them.

Tooke. We find "those who *had* rather *trust* to the equity" for "*would* rather."[5] I believe he is the last writer who uses the word *wit* for *understanding*, although we continue to say "he is out of his *wits*. He very properly says *encomiums*, to avoid a Grecism. We never say "rhododendr*a*," but "rhododendr*ons*." In our honest old English, all's well that ends well: and *encomiums*, *phenomenons*, *memorandums*, sound thoroughly and fully English. Hurd is less so in his use of the word *counterfeit*, which we are accustomed to take in an unfavorable sense. "Alexander suffered none but an Apelles and a Lysippus to *counterfeit* the form and features of his person." The sentence is moreover lax. I am glad, however, to find that he writes *subtile* instead of *subtle*. He has the merit too of using *hath* instead of *has*, in many places, but is so negligent as to omit it sometimes before a word beginning with *s*, or *ce* and *ci*, and *ex*. This is less bad than before *th*. Like Middleton, he writes *chast*.

[5] Landor here makes an erroneous criticism. See Dr. Fitzedward Hall's article in *American Journal of Philology*, II. 308 ff., for examples from fifteenth century on. In footnote to p. 314, Hall says, "*Had rather*, however it may be in conversation, has gradually been falling into disfavour with the best authors, during the last eighty years. Lord Macaulay uses it only three times." It is good English, and should not be allowed to disappear.

Johnson. Improperly. Nobody writes *wast* for *waste.* In all such words the vowel is pronounced long, which his spelling would contract. Dr. Hurd writes plainly, and yet not ignobly. His criticisms are always sensible, never acute; his language clear, but never harmonious.

Tooke. We cease to look for Eloquence; she vanished at the grave of Milton.

Johnson. Enough of Milton. Praise the French, sir! A republican is never so much at his ease as among slaves.

Tooke. We must lead happy lives then. But you were pleased to designate us as enemies to greatness and stability. What is it I admire in Milton but the greatness of his soul and the stability of his glory? Transitory is everything else on earth. The minutest of worms corrodes the throne; a slimier consumes what sat upon it yesterday. I know not the intentions and designs of others. I know not whether I myself am so virtuous that I should be called a republican, or so intelligent that I should be called a reformer. In regard to stability, I do however think I could demonstrate to you, that what has a broad basis is more stabile than what has a narrow one, and that nothing is gained to solidity by top-heaviness. In regard to greatness, I doubt my ability to convince you. Much in this is comparative. Compared with the plain, the mountains are indeed high: compared with what is above them in the universe of space, they are atoms and invisibilities. Such too are mortals. I do not say the creatures of the cannon-foundry and the cutlery: I do not say those of the jeweller and toyman, from whom we exclude light as from infants in a fever, and to whom we speak as to drunken men to make them quiet; but the most intellectual we ever have conversed with. What are they in comparison with a Shakespeare or a Bacon or a Newton? You however seemed to refer to power only. I have not meditated on this subject so much as you have, and my impression from it is weaker: nevertheless I do presume to be as hearty and as firm a supporter of it, removing (as I would do) the incumbrances from about it, and giving it ventilation.

Johnson. Ventilation ! yes, forsooth ! from the bellows of Brontes and Steropes and Pyracmon.

Tooke. Come, Doctor, let us throw a little more dust on our furnace, which blazes fiercelier than our work requires. The word *firy* comes appositely : why do we write it *fiery*, when *wire* gives *wiry ?* The word rushed into my mind out of Shakespeare,

> "And the *delighted* spirit
> To bathe in *fiery* floods." [6]

Truly this would be a very odd species of delight. But Shakespeare never wrote such nonsense : he wrote *belighted* (whence our *blighted*), struck by *lightning :* a fit preparation for such bathing. Why do we write *lieutenant*, when we write, "I would as *lief ?*" Would there be any impropriety or inconvenience in writing endevor and *demeanor* as we write *tenor*, omitting the *u* ?

Johnson. Then you would imitate cards of invitation, where we find *favor* and *honor*.

Tooke. We find *ancestor* and *author* and *editor* and *inventor* in the works of Doctor Jonson, who certainly bears no resemblance to a card of invitation. Why can not we place all these words on the same bench ? Most people will give us credit for knowing that they are derived from the Latin ; but the wisest will think us fools for ending them like *hour*, *sour*, and *flour*, pronounced so differently. I look upon it as a piece of impudence to think we can correct the orthography of such writers as Selden and Milton. They wrote not only *honor*, *favor*, *labor*, but likewise *brest*, *lookt*, and *unlookt-for*, *kinde*, *minde*. To spell these differently is a gross absurdity.

Johnson. By removing a single letter from the holy word *Saviour*, you would shock the piety of millions.

Tooke. In that word there is an analogy with others, although the class is small : *paviour* and *behaviour*, for instance.

Johnson. It now occurs to one that *honor* was spelt without

[6] *Measure for Measure*, III. 1, 121.

the *u* in the reign of Charles I., with it under his successor. Perhaps *armour* should be *armure*, from the low Latin *armatura*.

Tooke. If we must use such words as *reverie*, why not oblige them to conform with their predecessors, *travesty* and *gaiety*, which should have the *y* instead of the *i*. When we, following Cowley, write *pindarique*, we are laughed at; but nobody laughs at *picturesque* and *antique*, which are equally reducible to order.

Johnson. It is an awful thing to offend the Genius of our language. We can not spell our words as the French spell theirs. No other people in the world could reduce to nothing so stiff and stubborn a letter as *x*, which they do in *eaux*.

Tooke. We never censure them for writing *carême*, which they formerly wrote *caresme*, more anciently *quaresme*, and other words similarly: yet they have one language for writing, another for speaking, and affect a semblance of grammatical construction by a heap of intractable letters. While three suffice with us (*a*, *m*, *a*), they use eight (*aimaient*), of which the greater part not only are unprofitable, but would, in any language on earth, express a sound, or sounds, totally different from what they stand for: *r*, *s*, *t*, end words whose final sound is our *a*. We never censure the Italians for writing *ricetto*, as they pronounce it, without a *p*, and *benedetto* without a *c*: we never shudder at the danger they incur of losing the traces of derivation. The most beautiful and easy of languages assumes no appearance of strength by the display of harshness, nor would owe its preservation to rust. Let us always be analogical when we can be so without offence to pronunciation. There are some few words in which we are retentive of the Norman laws. We write *island* with an *s*, as if we feared to be thought ignorant of its derivation.[7] If we must be reverential to custom, let it rather be in the presence of the *puisne* judge. There are only the words *puisne*, *isle*, *island*, *demesne*, *viscount*, and the family name *Grosvenor*, in which an *s* is unsounded. I would omit it in these. The French have set us an example here, rejecting the useless letter. They also write *dette*, which we write

[7] Its derivation, as well as its pronunciation, would require the omission of *s*.

"debt." I know not why we should often use the letter *b* where we do. We have no need of it in *crumb* and *coomb;* the original words being without it.

Johnson. King Charles I. writes *dout.* In the same sentence he writes *wherefor.* But to such authority such men as you refuse allegiance even in language. Your *coomb* is sterile, and your *crumb* is dry; as such minutenesses must always be.

Tooke. So are nuts; but we crack and eat them. They are good for the full and for those only.

Johnson. The old writers had strange and arbitrary ways of spelling, which makes them appear more barbarous than they really are. There are learned men who would be grieved to see removed from words the traces of their origin.

Tooke. There are learned men who are triflers and inconsiderate. Learning, by its own force alone, will never remove a prejudice or establish a truth. Of what importance is it to us that we have derived these words from the Latin through the French? We do not preserve the termination of either. Formerly if many unnecessary letters were employed, some were omitted. *Ea* and *oa* were unusual. In various instances the spelling of Chaucer is more easy and graceful and elegant than the modern. He avoids the diphthong in *coat, green, keen, sheaf, goat;* writing *cote, grene, kene, shefe, gote.* Sackville, remarkable for diligence and daintiness of composition, spells "delights" *delites,* and "shriek" *shreek.* He also writes *bemone, brest, yeeld.* What we foolishly write *work* was formerly spelt *werke,* as we continue to pronounce it. Formerly there was such a word as *shew;* we still write it, but we pronounce it *show,* and we should never spell it otherwise. There is another of daily occurrence which we spell amiss, although we pronounce it rightly. *Coxcomb* in reality is *cockscomb,* and Ben Jonson writes it so, adding an *e.* He who first wrote it with an *x* certainly did not know how to spell his own name. In a somewhat like manner we have changed our *pennies* into *pence* and our *acquaintants* into *acquaintance.* Now what have these gained by such exchange? Latterly we have run into more un-

accountable follies; such as *compel* for *compell*, and I have seen *inter* for *interr*. Nobody ever pronounces the last syllables of these words short, as the spelling would indicate. You would be induced to believe such writers are ignorant that their *inter* and our *enter* are of a different stock. In the reign of Charles I. *parliament* was usually, though not universally, spelt *parlement:* how much more properly! What we write *door* and *floor* the learned and judicious Jonson wrote *dore* and *flore*. I find in his writings *cotes*, *profest*, *spred*, *partrich*, *grone*, *herth*, *theater*, *forraine*, *diamant*, *phesants*, *mushromes*, *banisht*, *rapt*, *rackt*, *addrest*, *ake*, *spred*, *stomack*, *plee*, *strein* (song), *windore*, *fild* (filled), *moniment*, *beleeve*, *yeeld*, *scepter*, *sute* (from sue), *mist* (missed), *grone*, *crackt*, *throte*, *yong*, *harbor*, *harth*, *oke*, *cruze*, *crost*, *markt*, *minde*, (which it is just as absurd to write *mind*, as it would be to write *time tim*), *taught*, *banisht*, *cherisht*, *heapt*, *thankt*. It is wonderful that so learned a man should be ignorant that *spitals* are hospitals. He writes: "Spittles, post-houses, hospitals." Had he spelt the first properly, as he has done all the other words, he could not have made this mistake. Fairfax writes *vew*, *bow* (bough), *milde*, *winde*, *oke*, *spred*, *talkt*, *embrast*. Fleming, in his translation of the Georgics, *ile*, *oke*, *anent;* (which latter word now a Scotticism, is used by Philemon Holland); *gote*, *feeld*, *yeeld*, *spindel*. Drayton, and most of our earlier writers, instead of *thigh*, write *thie*. Milton in the *Allegro*,

Where the bee with honied *thie*.

I perceive that you yourself, in your letter to Lord Chesterfield, have several times written the word *til;* and I am astonished that the propriety of it is not generally acknowledged after so weighty an authority. *Sent*, for *scent*, is to be found in old writers, following the derivation. There are several words now obsolete which are more elegant and harmonious than those retained instead. *Gentleness* and *idleness* are hardly so beautiful as Chaucer's *gentilesse* and *idlesse*. We retain the word *lessen*, but we have dropped *greaten*. Formerly good authors knew its value.

I wish I were as sure that

Multa renascentur quæ jam cecidere,

as I am that

cadentque
Quæ nunc sunt in honore vocabula.[8]

I am unacquainted with any language in which, during the prosperity of a people, the changes have run so seldom into improvement, so perpetually into impropriety. Within another generation, ours must have become so corrupt, that writers, if they hope for life, will find it necessary to mount up nearer to its sources.

Johnson. And what will they do when they get there? The leather from the stiff old jerkin will look queerly in its patches on the frayed satin.

Tooke. Good writers will suppress the violence of contrast. They will rather lay aside what by its impurity never had much weight, than what has lost it by the attrition of time; and they will be sparing of such expressions as are better for curiosities than for utensils. You and I would never say "by *that* means" instead of *these;* nor "*an* alms"; yet Addison does. He also says a "*dish* of coffee," yet coffee never was offered in a dish, unless it was done by the fox to the crane after the dinner he gave her. We hear of our *lyrical* poetry, of our *senate*, of our *manes*, of our *ashes*, of our *bards*, of our British *Muse*. Luckily the ancients could never run into these fooleries; but their judgment was rendered by discipline too exact for the admission of them. Only one valuable word has been received into our language since my birth, or perhaps since yours. I have lately heard *appreciate* for *estimate*.

Johnson. I am an antigallican in speech as in sentiments. What we have fairly won from the French let us keep, and avoid their new words like their new fashions. Words taken from them should be amenable, in their spelling, to English laws and regulations. *Appreciate* is a good and useful one; it signifies more

[8] *Many words will revive which have now fallen out of use, and will fall which are now in honor.* — HORACE, *Ars Poetica*, 70, 71.

than *estimate* or *value*; it implies to "value *justly*." All words are good which come when they are wanted; all which come when they are not wanted, should be dismissed.

Tooke. Let us return from new words to the old spelling of Benjamin Jonson, which other learned men followed: *deprest, speke, grete, fede, reson, reper, sheves, relefe, leve, grene, wether, erthe, breth, seke, seson, sege, meke, stepe, rome, appere, dere, throte, tothe, betwene, swete, deth, hele, chere, nere, frende, tretise, teche, conceve, tonge, bere, speche, stere.* Altogether there are about forty words, out of which the unnecessary diphthong is ejected. He always omits the *s* in *island* and *isle;* he writes *sovrane, subtil, childe,* and *werke.* He would no more have written *sceptre* than *quivre.*

Johnson. Milton too avoided the diphthong: he wrote *drede* and *redy.* Mandeville wrote *dede,* and *grane* of incense.

Tooke. You tell us that the letter *c* never ends a word according to English orthography; yet it did formerly both in words of Saxon origin and British, as *Eric, Rod-eric, Caradoc, Madoc. Wenlock,* the name of a town in Shropshire, formerly ended in *c,* and Hume always writes *Warwic.*

Johnson. Sir, do not quote infidels to me. Would you write *sic* and *quic?*

Tooke. I would if we derived them from the Greek or Latin.

Johnson. Without the authority of Ben Jonson, on whom you so relie?

Tooke. There is in Jonson strong sense, and wit too strong; it wants airiness, ease, and volatility. I do not admire his cast-iron ornaments, retaining but little (and that rugged and coarse-grained) of the ancient models, and nothing of the workmanship. But I admire his judgment in the spelling of many words, and I wish we could return to it. In others we are afraid of being as English as we might be and as we ought to be. Some appear to have been vulgarisms which are no longer such. By vulgarism I mean what is unfounded on ratiocination or necessity: for instance, *underneath.*

Johnson. Our best writers have used it.

Tooke. They have; and wisely; for it has risen up before them in sacred places, and it brings with it serious recollections. It was inscribed on the peasant's gravestone, long before it shone amid heraldic emblems in the golden line of Jonson, ushering in

"Pembroke's sister, Sydney's mother."[9]

Beside, it is significant and euphonious. Either half conveys the full meaning of the whole. But it is silly to argue that we gain ground by shortening on all occasions the syllables of a sentence. Half a minute, if indeed so much is requisite, is well spent in clearness, in fulness, and pleasureableness of expression, and in engaging the ear to carry a message to the understanding. *Whilst* is another vulgarism which authors have adopted, the last letter being added improperly. *While* is "the *time* when"; *whiles* "the time*s* when."[10]

Johnson. I am inclined to pay little attention to such fastidiousness, nor does it matter a straw whether we use the double *e* instead of *ete* in *sweet*, and the other words you recited from good authors. But I now am reminded that *near* is *nigher*, by Sir Thomas More writing "*never* the *nere*." However, you are not to suppose that I undervalue the authority of Benjamin Jonson. I find sometimes his poetry unsatisfactory and troublesome; but his prose is much better, and now and then almost harmonious; which his verses never are for half a dozen lines together.

Tooke. I know little about poetry; but it appears to me that in his, where he has not the ague, he has the cramp. Nearly all his thoughts are stolen. The prettiest of his poems,

"Drink to me only with thy eyes,"

is paraphrased from Scaliger's version of Aristænetus. He collected much spoil from his campaign in the Low Countries of

[9] From Jonson's "Epitaph on the Countess of Pembroke," beginning "Underneath this sable hearse," — but Landor, or his editor, has accidentally misplaced "Pembroke's" and "Sydney's."

[10] Another etymological error. It is an old genitive case.

Literature. However, his English for the most part is admirable, and was justly looked up to until Milton rose, overshadowing all England, all Italy, and all Greece. Since that great man's departure we have had nothing (in style I mean) at all remarkable. Locke and Defoe were the most purely English: and you yourself, who perhaps may not admire their simplicity, must absolve them from the charge of innovation. I perceive that you prefer the spelling of our gentlemen and ladies now flourishing to that not only of Middleton but of Milton.

Johnson. Before I say a word about either, I shall take the liberty, Sir, to reprehend your unreasonable admiration of such writers as Defoe and Locke. What, pray, have they added to the dignity or the affluence of our language?

Tooke. I would gladly see our language enriched as far as it can be without depraving it. At present we recur to the Latin and reject the Saxon. This is strengthening our language just as our empire is strengthened, by severing from it the most flourishing of its provinces. In another age we may cut down the branches of the Latin to admit the Saxon to shoot up again; for opposites come perpetually round. But it would be folly to throw away a current and commodious piece of money because of the stamp upon it, or to refuse an accession to an estate because our grandfather could do without it. A book composed of merely Saxon words (if indeed such a thing could be) would only prove the perverseness of the author. It would be inelegant, inharmonious, and deficient in the power of conveying thoughts and images, of which indeed such a writer could have but extremely few at starting. Let the Saxon however be always the groundwork.[11]

[11] Lack of space will not permit further selection, but the sticklers for our present irrational spelling would do well to read these dialogues of Johnson and Tooke, as well as those of Hare and Landor.

XXX.

LEIGH HUNT.

(1784–1859.)

AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, "WHAT IS POETRY?"

Including Remarks on Versification.[1]

[Written in 1844.]

Poetry, strictly and artistically so called, that is to say, considered not merely as poetic feeling, which is more or less shared by all the world, but as the operation of that feeling, such as we see it in the poet's book, is the utterance of a passion for truth, beauty, and power, embodying and illustrating its conceptions by imagination and fancy, and modulating its language on the principle of variety in uniformity. Its means are whatever the universe contains; and its ends, pleasure and exaltation. Poetry stands between nature and convention, keeping alive among us the enjoyment of the external and the spiritual world: it has constituted the most enduring fame of nations; and, next to Love and Beauty, which are its parents, is the greatest proof to man of the pleasure to be found in all things, and of the probable riches of infinitude. Poetry is a passion, because it seeks the deepest impressions; and because it must undergo, in order to convey them.

It is a passion for truth, because without truth the impression would be false or defective.

It is a passion for beauty, because its office is to exalt and refine

[1] The introduction to Leigh Hunt's selections from the English Poets, entitled *Imagination and Fancy*.

by means of pleasure, and because beauty is nothing but the loveliest form of pleasure.

It is a passion for power, because power is impression triumphant, whether over the poet, as desired by himself, or over the reader, as affected by the poet.

It embodies and illustrates its impressions by imagination, or images of the objects of which it treats, and other images brought in to throw light on those objects, in order that it may enjoy and impart the feeling of their truth in its utmost conviction and affluence.

It illustrates them by fancy, which is a lighter play of imagination, or the feeling of analogy coming short of seriousness, in order that it may laugh with what it loves, and show how it can decorate it with fairy ornament.

It modulates what it utters, because in running the whole round of beauty it must needs include beauty of sound; and because, in the height of its enjoyment, it must show the perfections of its triumph, and make difficulty itself become part of its facility and joy.

And lastly, Poetry shapes this modulation into uniformity for its outline, and variety for its parts, because it thus realizes the last idea of beauty itself, which includes the charm of diversity within the flowing round of habit and ease.

Poetry is imaginative passion. The quickest and subtlest test of the possession of its essence is in expression; the variety of things to be expressed shows the amount of its resources; and the continuity of the song completes the evidence of its strength and greatness. He who has thought, feeling, expression, imagination, action, character and continuity, all in the largest amount and highest degree, is the greatest poet.

Poetry includes whatsoever of painting can be made visible to the mind's eye, and whatsoever of music can be conveyed by sound and proportion without singing or instrumentation. But it far surpasses those divine arts, in suggestiveness, range, and intellectual wealth; — the first, in expression of thought, combination of images, and the triumph over space and time; the second,

in all that can be done by speech, apart from the tones and modulations of pure sound. Painting and music, however, include all those portions of the gift of poetry that can be expressed and heightened by the visible and melodious. Painting, in a certain apparent manner, is things themselves; music, in a certain audible manner, is their very emotion and grace. Music and painting are proud to be related to poetry, and poetry loves and is proud of them.

Poetry begins where matter of fact or of science ceases to be merely such, and to exhibit a further truth; that is to say, the connection it has with the world of emotion, and its power to produce imaginative pleasure. Inquiring of a gardener, for instance, what flower it is we see yonder, he answers, "A lily." This is matter of fact. The botanist pronounces it to be of the order of "Hexandria monogynia." This is matter of science. It is the "lady" of the garden, says Spenser; and here we begin to have a poetical sense of its fairness and grace. It is

> The plant and flower of *light*,

says Ben Jonson; and poetry then shows us the beauty of the flower in all its mystery and splendour.

If it be asked, how we know perceptions like these to be true, the answer is, by the fact of their existence, — by the consent and delight of poetic readers. And as feeling is the earliest teacher, and perception the only final proof of things the most demonstrable by science, so the remotest imaginations of the poets may often be found to have the closest connection with matter of fact; perhaps might always be so, if the subtlety of our perceptions were a match for the causes of them. Consider this image of Ben Jonson's — of a lily being the flower of light. Light, undecomposed, is white; and as the lily is white, and light is white, and whiteness itself is nothing *but* light, the two things, so far, are not merely similar, but identical. A poet might add, by an analogy drawn from the connexion of light and colour, that there is a "golden dawn" issuing out of the white lily, in the rich yellow of

the stamens. I have no desire to push this similarity farther than it may be worth. Enough has been stated to show that, in poetical as in other analogies, "the same feet of nature," as Bacon says, may be seen "treading in different paths"; and the most scornful, that is to say, dullest disciple of fact, should be cautious how he betrays the shallowness of his philosophy by discerning no poetry in its depths.

But the poet is far from dealing only with these subtle and analogical truths. Truth of every kind belongs to him, provided it can bud into any kind of beauty, or is capable of being illustrated and impressed by the poetic faculty. Nay, the simplest truth is often so beautiful and impressive of itself, that one of the greatest proofs of his genius consists in his leaving it to stand alone, illustrated by nothing but the light of its own tears or smiles, its own wonder, might, or playfulness. Hence the complete effect of many a simple passage in our old English ballads and romances, and of the passionate sincerity in general of the greatest early poets, such as Homer and Chaucer, who flourished before the existence of a "literary world," and were not perplexed by a heap of notions and opinions, or by doubts how emotion ought to be expressed. The greatest of their successors never write equally to the purpose, except when they can dismiss everything from their minds but the like simple truth. In the beautiful poem of *Sir Eger, Sir Graham, and Sir Gray-Steel* (see it in Ellis's *Specimens*, or Laing's *Early Metrical Tales*), a knight thinks himself disgraced in the eyes of his mistress: —

> Sir Eger said, "If it be so,
> Then wot I well I must forego
> Love-liking, and manhood, all clean?"
> *The water rush'd out of his een!*

Sir Gray-Steel is killed: —

> Gray-Steel into his death thus thraws (throes?)
> He *walters* (welters, — throws himself about) *and the grass up draws;*
> * * * * * * * *

A little while then lay he still
(Friends that him saw, liked full ill)
And bled into his armour bright.

The abode of Chaucer's *Reve*, or Steward, in the *Canterbury Tales*, is painted in two lines which nobody ever wished longer: —

His wonning (dwelling) was full fair upon an heath,
With greeny trees yshadowed was his place.

Every one knows the words of Lear, "most *matter-of-fact*, most melancholy":

Pray do not mock me:
I am a very foolish fond old man,
Fourscore and upward:
Not an hour more, nor less; and, to deal plainly,
I fear, I am not in my perfect mind.

It is thus by exquisite pertinence, melody, and the implied power of writing with exuberance, if need be, that beauty and truth become identical in poetry, and that pleasure, or at the very worst, a balm in our tears, is drawn out of pain.

It is a great and rare thing, and shows a lovely imagination, when the poet can write a commentary, as it were, of his own, on such sufficing passages of nature, and be thanked for the addition. There is an instance of this kind in Warner, an old Elizabethan poet, than which I know nothing sweeter in the world. He is speaking of Fair Rosamond, and of a blow given her by Queen Eleanor:

With that she dash'd her on the lips,
So dyèd double red:
Hard was the heart that gave the blow,
Soft were those lips that bled.

There are different kinds and degrees of imagination, some of them necessary to the formation of every true poet, and all of them possessed by the greatest. Perhaps they may be enumerated as follows: — First, that which presents to the mind any object or circumstance in every-day life; as when we imagine a man

holding a sword, or looking out of a window; — Second, that which presents real, but not every-day circumstances; as King Alfred tending the loaves, or Sir Philip Sidney giving up the water to the dying soldier; — Third, that which combines character and events directly imitated from real life with imitative realities of its own invention; as the probable parts of the histories of *Priam* and *Macbeth*, or what may be called natural fiction as distinguished from supernatural; — Fourth, that which conjures up things and events not to be found in nature; as Homer's gods, and Shakspeare's witches, enchanted horses and spears, Ariosto's hippogriff, &c.; — Fifth, that which, in order to illustrate or aggravate one image, introduces another: sometimes in simile, as when Homer compares Apollo descending in his wrath at noon-day to the coming of night-time; sometimes in metaphor, or simile comprised in a word, as in Milton's "motes that *people* the sunbeams"; sometimes in concentrating into a word the main history of any person or thing, past or even future, as in the "starry Galileo" of Byron, and that ghastly foregone conclusion of the epithet "murdered" applied to the yet living victim in Keats's story from Boccaccio, —

> So the two brothers and their *murder'd* man,
> Rode towards fair Florence;

sometimes in the attribution of a certain representative quality which makes one circumstance stand for others; as in Milton's grey-fly winding its "*sultry* horn," which epithet contains the heat of a summer's day; — Sixth, that which reverses this process, and makes a variety of circumstances take colour from one, like nature seen with jaundiced or glad eyes, or under the influence of storm or sunshine; as when in Lycidas, or the Greek pastoral poets, the flowers and the flocks are made to sympathize with a man's death; or, in the Italian poet, the river flowing by the sleeping Angelica seems talking of love —

> Parea che l'erba le fiorisse intorno,
> *E d' amor ragionasse quella riva!*[2]
>
> *Orlando Innamorato*, canto iii.

[2] *It seemed that the grass was blooming around her, and that bank was talking of love.*

or in the voluptuous homage paid to the sleeping Imogen by the very light in the chamber and the reaction of her own beauty upon itself; or in the "witch element" of the tragedy of *Macbeth* and the May-day night of *Faust;* — Seventh, and last, that which by a single expression, apparently of the vaguest kind, not only meets but surpasses in its effect the extremest force of the most particular description; as in that exquisite passage of Coleridge's *Christabel*, where the unsuspecting object of the witch's malignity is bidden to go to bed: —

> Quoth Christabel, So let it be!
> And as the lady bade, did she.
> Her gentle limbs did she undress,
> *And lay down in her loveliness:* —

a perfect verse surely, both for feeling and music. The very smoothness and gentleness of the limbs in the series of the letter *l*'s.

I am aware of nothing of the kind surpassing that most lovely inclusion of physical beauty in moral, neither can I call to mind any instances of the imagination that turns accompaniments into accessories, superior to those I have alluded to. Of the class of comparison, one of the most touching (many a tear must it have drawn from parents and lovers) is in a stanza which has been copied into the *Friar of Orders Grey*, out of Beaumont and Fletcher: —

> Weep no more, lady, Weep no more,
> Thy sorrow is in vain;
> *For violets pluck'd the sweetest showers*
> *Will ne'er make grow again.*

And Shakspeare and Milton abound in the very grandest; such as Antony's likening his changing fortunes to the cloud-rack; Lear's appeal to the old age of the heavens; Satan's appearance in the horizon, like a fleet "hanging in the clouds"; and the comparisons of him with the comet and the eclipse. Nor unworthy of their glorious company, for its extraordinary combination of delicacy and vastness, is that enchanting one of Shelley's in the *Adonais:* —

> Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
> Stains the white radiance of eternity.

I multiply these particulars in order to impress upon the reader's mind the great importance of imagination in all its phases, as a constituent part of the highest poetic faculty.

The happiest instance I remember of imaginative metaphor is Shakspeare's moonlight "sleeping" on a bank; but half his poetry may be said to be made up of it, metaphor indeed being the common coin of discourse. Of imaginary creatures none, out of the pale of mythology and the East, are equal, perhaps, in point of invention, to Shakspeare's Ariel and Caliban; though poetry may grudge to prose the discovery of a Fringed Woman, especially such as she has been described by her inventor in the story of *Peter Wilkins*;[3] and in point of treatment, the Mammon and Jealousy of Spenser, some of the monsters in Dante, particularly his Nimrod, his interchangements of creatures into one another, and (if I am not presumptuous in anticipating what I think will be the verdict of posterity) the Witch in Coleridge's Christabel, may rank even with the creations of Shakspeare. It may be doubted, indeed, whether Shakspeare had bile and nightmare enough in him to have thought of such detestable horrors as those of the interchanging adversaries (now serpent, now man), or even of the huge, half-blockish enormity of Nimrod, — in Scripture, the "mighty hunter" and builder of the tower of Babel, — in Dante, a tower of a man in his own person, standing with some of his brother giants up to the middle in a pit in hell, blowing a horn to which a thunder-clap is a whisper, and hallooing after Dante and his guide in the jargon of a lost tongue! The transformations are too odious to quote; but of the towering giant we cannot refuse ourselves the "fearful joy" of a specimen. It was twilight, Dante tells us, and he and his guide Virgil were silently pacing through one of the dreariest regions of hell, when the sound of a tremendous horn made him turn all his attention to the spot from

[3] Written by Robert Pultock about 1750. See Wheeler's Vocabulary in Appendix to Webster's Dictionary.

which it came. He there discovered, through the dusk, what seemed to be the towers of a city. Those are no towers, said his guide; they are giants standing up to the middle in one of these circular pits:[4]

I looked again; and as the eye makes out,
By little and little, what the mist conceal'd,
In which, till clearing up, the sky was steep'd;
So, looming through the gross and darksome air,
As we drew nigh, those mighty bulks grew plain,
And error quitted me, and terror join'd:
For in like manner as all round its height
Montereggione crowns itself with towers,
So tower'd above the circuit of that pit,
Though but half out of it, and half within,
The horrible giants that fought Jove, and still
Are threaten'd when he thunders. As we near'd
The foremost, I discern'd his mighty face,
His shoulders, breast, and more than half his trunk,
With both the arms down hanging by the sides.
His face appear'd to me, in length and breadth,
Huge as St. Peter's pinnacle at Rome,
And of a like proportion all his bones.
He open'd, as we went, his dreadful mouth,
Fit for no sweeter psalmody; and shouted
After us, in the words of some strange tongue,
"Ràfel ma-èe amech zabèe almee! —"
"Dull wretch!" my leader cried, "keep to thine horn,
And so vent better whatsoever rage
Or other passion stuff thee. Feel thy throat
And find the chain upon thee, thou confusion!
Lo! what a hoop is clench'd about thy gorge."
Then turning to myself he said, "His howl
Is its own mockery. This is Nimrod, he
Through whose ill thought it was that human kind
Were tongue-confounded. Pass him, and say nought:
For as he speaketh language known of none,
So none can speak save jargon to himself."

[4] HUNT quotes here the *Inferno*, canto xxxi. verse 34 *et seq.*, and translates it.

Assuredly it could not have been easy to find a fiction so uncouthly terrible as this in the hypochondria of Hamlet. Even his father had evidently seen no such ghost in the other world. All his phantoms were in the world he had left. Timon, Lear, Richard, Brutus, Prospero, Macbeth himself, none of Shakspeare's men had, in fact, any thought but of the earth they lived on, whatever supernatural fancy crossed them. The thing fancied was still a thing of this world, "in its habit as it lived," or no remoter acquaintance than a witch or a fairy. Its lowest depths (unless Dante suggested them) were the cellars under the stage. Caliban himself is a cross-breed between a witch and a clown. No offence to Shakspeare: who was not bound to be the greatest of healthy poets, and to have every morbid inspiration besides. What he might have done, had he set his wits to compete with Dante, I know not: all I know is, that in the infernal line he did nothing like him; and it is not to be wished he had. It is far better that, as a higher, more universal, and more beneficent variety of the genus Poet, he should have been the happier man he was, and left us the plump cheeks on his monument, instead of the carking visage of the great, but over-serious, and comparatively one-sided Florentine. Even the imagination of Spenser, whom we take to have been a "nervous gentleman" compared with Shakspeare, was visited with no such dreams as Dante. Or, if it was, he did not choose to make himself thinner (as Dante says *he* did) with dwelling upon them. He had twenty visions of nymphs and bowers, to one of the mud of Tartarus. Chaucer, for all he was "a man of this world" as well as the poets' world, and as great, perhaps a greater enemy of oppression than Dante, besides being one of the profoundest masters of pathos that ever lived, had not the heart to conclude the story of the famished father and his children, as finished by the inexorable anti-Pisan. But enough of Dante in this place. Hobbes, in order to daunt the reader from objecting to his friend Davenant's want of invention, says of these fabulous creations in general, in his letter prefixed to the poem of *Gondibert*, that "impenetrable armours, enchanted castles, invul-

nerable bodies, iron men, flying horses, and a thousand other such things, are easily feigned by them that dare."

These are girds at Spenser and Ariosto. But, with leave of Hobbes (who translated *Homer* as if on purpose to show what execrable verses could be written by a philosopher), enchanted castles and flying horses are not easily feigned, as Ariosto and Spenser feigned them; and that just makes all the difference. For proof, see the accounts of Spenser's enchanted castle in Book the Third, Canto Twelfth, of the *Fairy Queen;* and let the reader of Italian open the *Orlando Furioso* at its first introduction of the Hippogriff (canto iv. st. 3), where Bradamante, coming to an inn, hears a great noise, and sees all the people looking up at something in the air; upon which, looking up herself she sees a knight in shining armour riding towards the sunset upon a creature with variegated wings, and then dipping and disappearing among the hills. Chaucer's steed of brass, that was

So horsly and so quick of eye,

is copied from the life. You might pat him and feel his brazen muscles. Hobbes, in objecting to what he thought childish, made a childish mistake. His criticism is just such as a boy might pique himself upon, who was educated on mechanical principles, and thought he had outgrown his *Goody Two-shoes*. With a wonderful dimness of discernment in poetic matters, considering his acuteness in others, he fancies he has settled the question by pronouncing such creations "impossible"!

To the brazier they are impossible, no doubt; but not to the poet. Their possibility, if the poet wills it, is to be conceded; the problem is, the creature being given, how to square its actions with probability, according to the nature assumed of it. Hobbes did not see that the skill and beauty of these fictions lay in bringing them within those very regions of truth and likelihood in which he thought they could not exist. Hence the serpent Python of Chaucer,

Sleeping against the sun upon a day,

when Apollo slew him. Hence the chariot-drawing dolphins of Spenser, softly swimming along the shore lest they should hurt themselves against the stones and gravel. Hence Shakspeare's Ariel, living under blossoms, and riding at evening on the bat; and his domestic namesake in the *Rape of the Lock* (the imagination of the drawing-room) saving a lady's petticoat from the coffee with his plumes, and directing atoms of snuff into a coxcomb's nose. In the *Orlando Furioso* (canto xv. st. 65) is a wild story of a cannibal necromancer, who laughs at being cut to pieces, coming together again like quicksilver, and picking up his head when it is cut off, sometimes by the hair, sometimes by the nose! This, which would be purely ridiculous in the hands of an inferior poet, becomes interesting, nay grand, in Ariosto's, from the beauties of his style, and its conditional truth to nature. The monster has a fated hair on his head, — a single hair, — which must be taken from it before he can be killed. Decapitation itself is of no consequence, without that proviso. The Paladin Astolfo, who has fought this phenomenon on horseback, and succeeded in getting the head and galloping off with it, is therefore still at a loss what to be at. How is he to discover such a needle in such a bottle of hay? The trunk is spurring after him to recover it, and he seeks for some evidence of the hair in vain. At length he bethinks him of scalping the head. He does so; and the moment the operation arrives at the place of the hair, *the face of the head becomes pale, the eyes turn in their sockets,* and the lifeless pursuer tumbles from his horse:[5]

> Then grew the visage pale, and deadly wet,
> The eyes turn'd in their sockets, drearily;
> And all things show'd the villain's sun was set,
> His trunk that was in chace, fell from its horse,
> And giving the last shudder, was a corse.

It is thus, and thus only, by making Nature his companion wherever he goes, even in the most supernatural region, that the

[5] HUNT quotes the Italian and translates it.

poet, in the words of a very instructive phrase, takes the world along with him. It is true, he must not (as the Platonists would say) humanize weakly or mistakenly in that region; otherwise he runs the chance of forgetting to be true to the supernatural itself, and so betraying a want of imagination from that quarter. His nymphs will have no taste of their woods and waters; his gods and goddesses be only so many fair or frowning ladies and gentlemen, such as we see in ordinary paintings; he will be in no danger of having his angels likened to a sort of wild-fowl, as Rembrandt has made them in his "Jacob's Dream." His Bacchuses will never remind us, like Titian's, of the force and fury, as well as of the graces of wine. His Jupiter will reduce no females to ashes; his fairies be nothing fantastical; his gnomes not "of the earth, earthy." And this again will be wanting to Nature; for it will be wanting to the supernatural, as Nature would have made it, working in a supernatural direction. Nevertheless, the poet, even for imagination's sake, must not become a bigot to imaginative truth, dragging it down into the region of the mechanical and the limited, and losing sight of its paramount privilege, which is to make beauty in a human sense, the lady and queen of the universe. He would gain nothing by making his ocean-nymphs mere fishy creatures, upon the plea that such only could live in the water: his wood-nymphs with faces of knotted oak; his angels without breath and song, because no lungs could exist between the earth and the empyrean. The Grecian tendency in this respect is safer than the Gothic; nay, more imaginative; for it enables us to imagine *beyond* imagination, and to bring all things healthily round to their only present final ground of sympathy, — the human. When we go to heaven, we may idealize in a superhuman mode, and have altogether different notions of the beautiful; but till then we must be content with the loveliest capabilities of earth. The sea-nymphs of Greece were still beautiful women, though they lived in the water. The gills and fins of the ocean's natural inhabitants were confined to their lowest semihuman attendants; or if Triton himself was not quite human, it

was because he represented the fiercer part of the vitality of the seas, as they did the fairer.[6]

* * * * * * *

If a young reader should ask, after all, What is the quickest way of knowing bad poets from good, the best poets from the next best, and so on? the answer is, the only and twofold way: first, the perusal of the best poets with the greatest attention; and second, the cultivation of that love of truth and beauty which made them what they are. Every true reader of poetry partakes a more than ordinary portion of the poetic nature; and no one can be completely such, who does not love, or take an interest in, everything that interests the poet, from the firmament to the daisy, — from the highest heart of man to the most pitiable of the low. It is a good practice to read with pen in hand, marking what is liked or doubted. It rivets the attention, realizes the greatest amount of enjoyment, and facilitates reference. It enables the reader also, from time to time, to see what progress he makes with his own mind, and how it grows up towards the stature of its exalter.

If the same person should ask, What class of poetry is the highest? I should say, undoubtedly, the Epic; for it includes the drama, with narration besides; or the speaking and action of the characters, with the speaking of the poet himself, whose utmost address is taxed to relate all well for so long a time, particularly in the passages least sustained by enthusiasm. Whether this class has included the greatest poet, is another question still under trial; for Shakspeare perplexes all such verdicts, even when the claimant is Homer; though, if a judgment may be drawn from his early narratives (*Venus and Adonis*, and the *Rape of Lucrece*), it is to be doubted whether even Shakspeare could have told a story like

[6] In further illustration of the power of *Imagination* HUNT quotes from the *Iliad*, XVIII. 203–231, and XXIV. 468–516, with translation. *Fancy* is treated much more briefly, and then follow some excellent remarks on *Versification*, but lack of space will not permit a selection. The conclusion of the Essay follows.

Homer, owing to that incessant activity and superfœtation of thought, a little less of which might be occasionally desired even in his plays; — if it were possible, once possessing anything of his, to wish it away. Next to Homer and Shakspeare come such narrators as the less universal, but still intenser Dante; Milton, with his dignified imagination; the universal, profoundly simple Chaucer; and luxuriant, remote Spenser — immortal child in poetry's most poetic solitudes: then the great second-rate dramatists; unless those who are better acquainted with Greek tragedy than I am, demand a place for them before Chaucer: then the airy yet robust universality of Ariosto; the hearty, out-of-door nature of Theocritus, also a universalist; the finest lyrical poets (who only take short flights, compared with the narrators); the purely contemplative poets who have more thought than feeling; the descriptive, satirical, didactic, epigrammatic. It is to be borne in mind, however, that the first poet of an inferior class may be superior to followers in the train of a higher one, though the superiority is by no means to be taken for granted; otherwise Pope would be superior to Fletcher, and Butler to Pope. Imagination, teeming with action and character, makes the greatest poets; feeling and thought the next; fancy (by itself) the next; wit the last. Thought by itself makes no poet at all; for the mere conclusions of the understanding can at best be only so many intellectual matters of fact. Feeling, even destitute of conscious thought, stands a far better poetical chance; feeling being a sort of thought without the process of thinking, — a grasper of the truth without seeing it. And what is very remarkable, feeling seldom makes the blunders that thought does. An idle distinction has been made between taste and judgment. Taste is the very maker of judgment. Put an artificial fruit in your mouth, or only handle it, and you will soon perceive the difference between judging from taste or tact, and judging from the abstract figment called judgment. The latter does but throw you into guesses and doubts. Hence the conceits that astonish us in the gravest, and even subtlest thinkers, whose taste is not proportionate to their

mental perceptions: men like Donne, for instance; who, apart from accidental personal impressions, seem to look at nothing as it really is, but only as to what may be thought of it. Hence, on the other hand, the delightfulness of those poets who never violate truth of feeling, whether in things real or imaginary; who are always consistent with their object and its requirements; and who run the great round of nature, not to perplex and be perplexed, but to make themselves and us happy. And luckily, delightfulness is not incompatible with greatness, willing soever as men may be in their present imperfect state to set the power to subjugate above the power to please. Truth, of any great kind whatsoever, makes great writing. This is the reason why such poets as Ariosto, though not writing with a constant detail of thought and feeling like Dante are justly considered great as well as delightful. Their greatness proves itself by the same truth of nature, and sustained power, though in a different way. Their action is not so crowded and weighty; their sphere has more territories less fertile; but it has enchantments of its own, which excess of thought would spoil, — luxuries, laughing graces, animal spirits; and not to recognize the beauty and greatness of these, treated as they treat them, is simply to be defective in sympathy. Every planet is not Mars or Saturn. There is also Venus and Mercury. There is one genius of the south, and another of the north, and others uniting both. The reader who is too thoughtless or too sensitive to like intensity of any sort, and he who is too thoughtful or too dull to like anything but the greatest possible stimulus of reflection or passion, are equally wanting in complexional fitness for a thorough enjoyment of books. Ariosto occasionally says as fine things as Dante, and Spenser as Shakspeare; but the business of both is to enjoy; and in order to partake their enjoyment to its full extent, you must feel what poetry is in the general as well as the particular, must be aware that there are different songs of the spheres, some fuller of notes, and others of a sustained delight; and as the former keep you perpetually alive to thought or passion, so from the latter you receive a constant harmonious

sense of truth and beauty, more agreeable perhaps on the whole, though less exciting. Ariosto, for instance, does not *tell a story* with the brevity and concentrated passion of Dante; every sentence is not so full of matter, nor the style so removed from the indifference of prose; yet you are charmed with a truth of another sort equally characteristic of the writer, equally drawn from nature and substituting a healthy sense of enjoyment for intenser emotion. Exclusiveness of liking for this or that mode of truth, only shows, either that a reader's perceptions are limited, or that he would sacrifice truth itself to his favourite form of it. Sir Walter Raleigh, who was as trenchant with his pen as his sword, hailed the *Faerie Queene* of his friend Spenser in verses in which he said that Petrarch was thenceforward to be no more heard of; and that in all English poetry there was nothing he counted "of any price," but the effusions of the new author. Yet Petrarch is still living; Chaucer was not abolished by Sir Walter; and Shakspeare is thought somewhat valuable. A botanist might as well have said, that myrtles and oaks were to disappear, because acacias had come up. It is with the poet's creations, as with Nature's, great or small. Wherever truth and beauty, whatever their amount, can be worthily shaped into verse and answer to some demand for it in our hearts, there poetry is to be found; whether in productions grand and beautiful as some great event, or some mighty, leafy solitude, or no bigger and more pretending than a sweet face or a bunch of violets; whether in Homer's epic or Gray's *Elegy*, in the enchanted gardens of Ariosto and Spenser, or the very pot-herbs of the *Schoolmistress* of Shenstone, the balms of the simplicity of a cottage. Not to know and feel this, is to be deficient in the universality of Nature herself, who is a poetess on the smallest as well as the largest scale, and who calls upon us to admire all her productions; not indeed with the same degree of admiration, but with no refusal of it except to defect.

I cannot draw this essay towards its conclusion better than with three memorable words of Milton; who has said, that poetry, in comparison with science, is "simple, sensuous, and passionate."

By simple, he means unperplexed and self-evident; by sensuous, genial and full of imagery; by passionate, excited and enthusiastic. I am aware that different constructions have been put on some of these words; but the context seems to me to necessitate those before us. I quote, however, not from the original, but from an extract in the *Remarks on Paradise Lost* by Richardson.

What the poet has to cultivate above all things is love and truth; — what he has to avoid, like poison, is the fleeting and the false. He will get no good by proposing to be "in earnest at the moment." His earnestness must be innate and habitual; born with him, and felt to be his most precious inheritance. "I expect neither profit nor general fame by my writings," says Coleridge, in the Preface to his Poems, "and I consider myself as having been amply repaid without either. Poetry has been to me its '*own exceeding great reward;*' it has soothed my afflictions; it has multiplied and refined my enjoyments; it has endeared solitude; and it has given me the habit of wishing to discover the good and the beautiful in all that meets and surrounds me." (*Pickering's edition*, p. 10.)

"Poetry," says Shelley, "lifts the veil from the hidden beauty of the world, and *makes familiar objects be as if they were not familiar*. It reproduces all that it represents; and the impersonations clothed in its Elysian light stand thenceforward in the minds of those who have once contemplated them, as memorials of that gentle and exalted content which extends itself over all thoughts and actions with which it co-exists. The great secret of morals is love, or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another, and of many others: the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own. The great instrument of moral good is imagination; and poetry administers to the effect by acting upon the cause." — (*Essays and Letters*, vol. i. p. 16.)

I would not willingly say anything after perorations like these; but as treatises on poetry may chance to have auditors who think

themselves called upon to vindicate the superiority of what is termed useful knowledge, it may be as well to add, that if the poet may be allowed to pique himself on any one thing more than another, compared with those who undervalue him, it is on that power of undervaluing nobody, and no attainments different from his own, which is given him by the very faculty of imagination they despise. The greater includes the less. They do not see that their inability to comprehend him argues the smaller capacity. No man recognizes the worth of utility more than the poet: he only desires that the meaning of the term may not come short of its greatness, and exclude the noblest necessities of his fellow-creatures. He is quite as much pleased, for instance, with the facilities for rapid conveyance afforded him by the railroad as the dullest confiner of its advantages to that single idea, or as the greatest two-idea'd man who varies that single idea with hugging himself on his "buttons" or his good dinner. But he sees also the beauty of the country through which he passes, of the towns, of the heavens, of the steam-engine itself, thundering and fuming along like a magic horse, of the affections that are carrying, perhaps, half the passengers on their journey, nay, of those of the great two-idea'd man; and, beyond all this, he discerns the incalculable amount of good, and knowledge, and refinement, and mutual consideration, which this wonderful invention is fitted to circulate over the globe, perhaps to the displacement of war itself, and certainly to the diffusion of millions of enjoyments.

"And a button-maker, after all, invented it!" cries our friend.

Pardon me — it was a nobleman. A button-maker may be a very excellent, and a very poetical man too, and yet not have been the first man visited by a sense of the gigantic powers of the combination of water and fire. It was a nobleman who first thought of this most poetical bit of science. It was a nobleman who first thought of it, — a captain who first tried it, — and a button-maker who perfected it. And he who put the nobleman on such thoughts, was the great philosopher, Bacon, who said that poetry had "something divine in it," and was necessary to the satisfaction of the human mind.

XXXI.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

(1775–1859.)

BIOGRAPHIES.

SHAKSPEARE.[1]

[**Written in 1838.**]

ON a first review of the circumstances, we have reason to feel no little perplexity in finding the materials for a Life of this transcendent writer so meagre and so few, and amongst them the larger part of doubtful authority. All the energy of curiosity directed upon this subject, through a period of one hundred and fifty years (for so long it is since Betterton the actor began to make researches) has availed us little or nothing. Neither the local traditions of his provincial birthplace, though sharing with London through half a century the honour of his familiar presence, nor the recollections of that brilliant literary circle with whom he lived in the metropolis, have yielded much more than such an outline of his history as is oftentimes to be gathered from the penurious records of a gravestone. That he lived, and that he died, and that he was "a little lower than the angels" — these make up

[1] Contributed in 1838 to the seventh edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Reprinted in Vol. IV. of Professor Masson's new and enlarged edition of De Quincey's Collected Writings, which see for valuable notes. Professor Masson quotes from De Quincey's letters, "No paper ever cost me so much labour: parts of it have been recomposed three times over;" and again, "The Shakspeare article cost me more intense labour than any I ever wrote in my life." The first two pages of the essay are here omitted.

pretty nearly the amount of our undisputed report. It may be doubted indeed whether at this day we are as accurately acquainted with the life of Shakspeare as with that of Chaucer, though divided from each other by an interval of two centuries, and (what should have been more effectual towards oblivion) by the wars of the Two Roses. And yet the traditional memory of a rural and a sylvan region, such as Warwickshire at that time was, is usually exact as well as tenacious; and, with respect to Shakspeare in particular, we may presume it to have been full and circumstantial through the generation succeeding to his own, not only from the curiosity, and perhaps something of a scandalous interest, which would pursue the motions of one living so large a part of his life at a distance from his wife, but also from the final reverence and honour which would settle upon the memory of a poet so pre-eminently successful; of one who, in a space of five-and-twenty years, after running a bright career in the capital city of his native land, and challenging notice from the throne, had retired with an ample fortune created by his personal efforts and by labours purely intellectual.

How are we to account then for that deluge, as if from Lethe, which has swept away so entirely the traditional memorials of one so illustrious? Such is the fatality of error which overclouds every question connected with Shakspeare, that two of his principal critics, Steevens and Malone, have endeavoured to solve the difficulty by cutting it with a falsehood. They deny in effect that he *was* illustrious in the century succeeding to his own, however much he has since become so. We shall first produce their statements in their own words, and we shall then briefly review them.

Steevens delivers *his* opinion in the following terms:—"How little Shakspeare was once read may be understood from Tate, who, in his dedication to the altered play of 'King Lear,' speaks of the original as an obscure piece, recommended to his notice by a friend; and the author of the 'Tatler' having occasion to quote a few lines out of 'Macbeth,' was content to receive them from

Davenant's alteration of that celebrated drama, in which almost every original beauty is either awkwardly disguised or arbitrarily omitted." Another critic, who cites this passage from Steevens, pursues the hypothesis as follows : — " In fifty years after his death Dryden mentions that he was then become *a little obsolete.* In the beginning of the last century Lord Shaftesbury complains of his *rude unpolished style and his antiquated phrase and wit.* It is certain that for nearly a hundred years after his death, partly owing to the immediate revolution and rebellion, and partly to the licentious taste encouraged in Charles II.'s time, and perhaps partly to the incorrect state of his works, he was ALMOST ENTIRELY NEGLECTED." The critic then goes on to quote with approbation the opinion of Malone — that " if he had been read, admired, studied, and imitated in the same degree as he is now, the enthusiasm of some one or other of his admirers in the last age would have induced him to make some inquiries concerning the history of his theatrical career, and the anecdotes of his private life." After which this enlightened writer re-affirms and clenches the judgment he has quoted by saying : " His admirers, however, *if he had admirers in that age*, possessed no portion of such enthusiasm."

It may perhaps be an instructive lesson to young readers if we now show them, by a short sifting of these confident dogmatists, how easy it is for a careless or a half-read man to circulate the most absolute falsehoods under the semblance of truth ; falsehoods which impose upon himself as much as they do upon others. We believe that not one word or illustration is uttered in the sentence cited from these three critics which is not *virtually* in the very teeth of the truth.

To begin with Mr. Nahum Tate. This poor grub of literature, if he did really speak of " Lear" as " an *obscure* piece, recommended to his notice by a friend," of which we must be allowed to doubt, was then uttering a conscious falsehood. It happens that " Lear " was one of the few Shaksperian dramas which had kept the stage unaltered. But it is easy to see a mercenary motive

in such an artifice as this. Mr. Nahum Tate is not of a class of whom it can be safe to say that they are "well known;" they and their desperate tricks are essentially obscure, and good reason he has to exult in the felicity of such obscurity, for else this same vilest of travesties, Mr. Nahum's "Lear," would consecrate his name to everlasting scorn. For himself, he belonged to the age of Dryden rather than of Pope; he "flourished," if we can use such a phrase of one who was always withering, about the era of the Revolution; and his "Lear," we believe, was arranged in the year 1682. But the family to which he belongs is abundantly recorded in the "Dunciad"; and his own name will be found amongst its catalogues of heroes.

With respect to *the author of the "Tatler,"* a very different explanation is requisite. Steevens means the reader to understand Addison; but it does not follow that the particular paper in question was from his pen. Nothing, however, could be more natural than to quote from the common form of the play as then in possession of the stage. It was *there*, beyond a doubt, that a fine gentleman living upon town, and not professing any deep scholastic knowledge of literature (a light in which we are always to regard the writers of the "Spectator," "Guardian," &c.), would be likely to have learned anything he quoted from "Macbeth." This we say generally of the writers in those periodical papers; but with reference to Addison in particular, it is time to correct the popular notion of his literary character, or at least to mark it by severer lines of distinction. It is already pretty well known that Addison had no very intimate acquaintance with the literature of his own country. It is known also that he did not think such an acquaintance any ways essential to the character of an elegant scholar and *littérateur*. Quite enough he found it, and more than enough for the time he had to spare, if he could maintain a tolerable familiarity with the foremost Latin poets, and a very slender one indeed with the Grecian. *How* slender we can see in his "Travels." Of modern authors none as yet had been published with notes, commentaries, or critical collations of the text; and

accordingly Addison looked upon all of them, except those few who professed themselves followers in the retinue and equipage of the ancients, as creatures of a lower race. Boileau, as a mere imitator and propagator of Horace, he read, and probably little else, amongst the French Classics. Hence it arose that he took upon himself to speak sneeringly of Tasso. To this, which was a bold act for his timid mind, he was emboldened by the countenance of Boileau. Of the elder Italian authors, such as Ariosto, and *à fortiori* Dante, he knew absolutely nothing. Passing to our own literature, it is certain that Addison was profoundly ignorant of Chaucer and of Spenser. Milton only — and why? simply because he was a brilliant scholar, and stands like a bridge between the Christian literature and the Pagan — Addison had read and esteemed. There was also in the very constitution of Milton's mind, in the majestic regularity and planetary solemnity of its *epic* movements, something which he could understand and appreciate: as to the meteoric and incalculable eccentricities of the *dramatic* mind, as it displayed itself in the heroic age of our drama, amongst the Titans of 1590–1630, they confounded and overwhelmed him.

In particular, with regard to Shakspeare, we shall now proclaim a discovery which we made some twenty years ago. We, like others, from seeing frequent references to Shakspeare in the "Spectator," had acquiesced in the common belief that, although Addison was no doubt profoundly unlearned in Shakspeare's language, and thoroughly unable to do him justice (and this we might well assume, since his great rival Pope, who had expressly studied Shakspeare, was, after all, so memorably deficient in the appropriate knowledge), yet that of course he had a vague popular knowledge of the mighty poet's cardinal dramas. Accident only led us into a discovery of our mistake. Twice or thrice we had observed that, if Shakspeare were quoted, that paper turned out not to be Addison's; and at length, by express examination, we ascertained the curious fact that Addison has never in one instance quoted or made any reference to Shakspeare. But was this, as

Steevens most disingenuously pretends, to be taken as an exponent of the public feeling towards Shakspeare? Was Addison's neglect representative of a general neglect? If so, whence came Rowe's edition, Pope's, Theobald's, Sir Thomas Hanmer's, Bishop Warburton's, all upon the heels of one another? With such facts staring him in the face, how shameless must be that critic who could, in support of such a thesis, refer to "*the author of the 'Tatler,'*" contemporary with all these editors. The truth is, Addison was well aware of Shakspeare's hold on the popular mind; too well aware of it. The feeble constitution of the poetic faculty as existing in himself, forbade his sympathising with Shakspeare; the proportions were too colossal for his delicate vision; and yet, as one who sought popularity himself, he durst not shock what perhaps he viewed as a national prejudice. Those who have happened, like ourselves, to see the effect of passionate music and "deep-inwoven harmonics" upon the feeling of an idiot, may conceive what we mean. Such music does not utterly revolt the idiot; on the contrary, it has a strange but horrid fascination for him: it alarms, irritates, disturbs, makes him profoundly unhappy; and chiefly by unlocking imperfect glimpses of thoughts and slumbering instincts, which it is for his peace to have entirely obscured, because for him they can be revealed only partially, and with the sad effect of throwing a baleful gleam upon his blighted condition. Do we mean, then, to compare Addison with an idiot? Not generally, by any means. Nobody can more sincerely admire him where he was a man of real genius — viz., in his delineations of character and manners, or in the exquisite delicacies of his humour. But assuredly Addison as a poet was amongst the sons of the feeble, and between the authors of "Cato" and "King Lear" there was a gulf never to be bridged over.

But Dryden, we are told, pronounced Shakspeare already in *his* day "*a little obsolete.*" Here, now, we have wilful, deliberate falsehood. *Obsolete*, in Dryden's meaning, does not imply that he was so with regard to his popularity (the question then at issue), but with regard to his diction and choice of words. To

cite Dryden as a witness for any purpose against Shakspeare — Dryden, who of all men had the most ransacked wit and exhausted language in celebrating the supremacy of Shakspeare's genius — does indeed require as much shamelessness in feeling as mendacity in principle.[2]

But then Lord Shaftesbury, who may be taken as half-way between Dryden and Pope (Dryden died in 1700, Pope was then twelve years old, and Lord S. wrote chiefly, we believe, between 1700 and 1710), "complains," it seems, "of his rude unpolished style, and his antiquated phrase and wit." What if he does? Let the whole truth be told, and then we shall see how much stress is to be laid upon such a judgment. The second Lord Shaftesbury, the author of the "Characteristics," was the grandson of that famous political agitator, the Chancellor Shaftesbury, who passed his whole life in storms of his own creation. The second Lord Shaftesbury was a man of crazy constitution, querulous from ill-health, and had received an eccentric education from his eccentric grandfather. He was practised daily in *talking* Latin, to which afterwards he added a competent study of the Greek; and finally he became unusually learned for his rank, but the most absolute and undistinguishing pedant that perhaps literature has to show. He sneers continually at the regular-built academic pedant; but he himself, though no academic, was essentially the very impersonation of pedantry. No thought however beautiful, no image however magnificent, could conciliate his praise as long as it was clothed in English; but present him with the most trivial commonplaces in Greek, and he unaffectedly fancied them divine; mistaking the pleasurable sense of his own power in a difficult and rare accomplishment for some peculiar force or beauty in the passage. Such was the outline of his literary taste. And was it upon Shakspeare only, or upon him chiefly, that he lavished his pedantry? Far from it. He attacked Milton with no less fervour; he attacked Dryden with a thousand times more. Jeremy Taylor he quoted only to ridicule; and even Locke, the confidential friend of his

[2] See *ante*, pp. 243–4, for Dryden's opinion of Shakspeare.

grandfather, he never alludes to without a sneer. As to Shakspeare, so far from Lord Shaftesbury's censures arguing his deficient reputation, the very fact of his noticing him at all proves his enormous popularity; for upon system he noticed those only who ruled the public taste. The insipidity of his objections to Shakspeare may be judged from this, that he comments in a spirit of absolute puerility upon the name *Desdemona*, as though intentionally formed from the Greek word for *superstition*. In fact, he had evidently read little beyond the list of names in Shakspeare; yet there is proof enough that the irresistible beauty of what little he *had* read was too much for all his pedantry, and startled him exceedingly; for ever afterwards he speaks of Shakspeare as one who, with a little aid from Grecian sources, really had something great and promising about him. As to modern authors, neither this Lord Shaftesbury nor Addison read anything for the latter years of their life but Bayle's Dictionary. And most of the little scintillations of erudition which may be found in the notes to the "Characteristics," and in the Essays of Addison, are derived, almost without exception, and uniformly without acknowledgment, from Bayle.

Finally, with regard to the sweeping assertion, that "for nearly a hundred years after his death Shakspeare was almost entirely neglected," we shall meet this scandalous falsehood by a rapid view of his fortunes during the century in question. The tradition has always been, that Shakspeare was honoured by the special notice of Queen Elizabeth, as well as by that of James I. At one time we were disposed to question the truth of this tradition; but that was for want of having read attentively the lines of Ben Jonson to the memory of Shakspeare, those generous lines which have so absurdly been taxed with faint praise. Jonson could make no mistake on this point: he, as one of Shakspeare's familiar companions, must have witnessed at the very time, and accompanied with friendly sympathy, every motion of royal favour towards Shakspeare. Now he, in words which leave no room for doubt, exclaims —

Sweet swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear,
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James.[3]

These princes, then, *were* taken, were fascinated, with some of Shakspeare's dramas. In Elizabeth the approbation would probably be sincere. In James we can readily suppose it to have been assumed, for he was a pedant in a different sense from Lord Shaftesbury; not from undervaluing modern poetry, but from caring little or nothing for any poetry, although he wrote about its mechanic rules. Still, the royal *imprimatur* would be influential and serviceable no less when offered hypocritically than in full sincerity. Next let us consider, at the very moment of Shakspeare's death, who were the leaders of the British youth, the *principes juventutis*, in the two fields, equally important to a great poet's fame, of rank and of genius? The Prince of Wales and John Milton; the first being then about sixteen years old, the other about eight. Now these two great powers, as we may call them, these presiding stars over all that was English in thought and action, were both impassioned admirers of Shakspeare. Each of them counts for many thousands. The Prince of Wales had learned to appreciate Shakspeare, not originally from reading him, but from witnessing the court representations of his plays at Whitehall. Afterwards we know that he made Shakspeare his closet companion, for he was reproached with doing so by Milton. And we know also, from the just criticism pronounced upon the character and diction of Caliban by one of Charles's confidential counsellors, Lord Falkland, that the king's admiration of Shakspeare had impressed a determination upon the Court reading. As to Milton, by double prejudices, puritanical and classical, his mind had been preoccupied against the full impressions of Shakspeare. And we know that there is such a thing as keep-

[3] From Ben Jonson's lines "To the memory of my beloved Master William Shakspeare, and what he hath left us," prefixed to the First Folio edition of Shakspeare, 1623.

ing the sympathies of love and admiration in a dormant state, or state of abeyance; an effort of self-conquest realised in more cases than one by the ancient fathers, both Greek and Latin, with regard to the profane classics. Intellectually they admired, and would not belie their admiration; but they did not give their hearts cordially, they did not abandon themselves to their natural impulses. They averted their eyes and weaned their attention from the dazzling object. Such, probably, was Milton's state of feeling towards Shakspeare after 1642, when the theatres were suppressed, and the fanatical fervour in its noontide heat. Yet even then he did not belie his reverence intellectually for Shakspeare; and in his younger days we know that he had spoken more enthusiastically of Shakspeare than he ever did again of any uninspired author. Not only did he address a sonnet to his memory, in which he declares that kings would wish to die, if by dying they could obtain such a monument in the hearts of men; but he also speaks of him in his *Il Penserose* as the tutelary genius of the English stage. In this transmission of the torch (λαμπαδοφορία) Dryden succeeds to Milton: he was born nearly thirty years later; about thirty years they were contemporaries, and by thirty years, or nearly, Dryden survived his great leader. Dryden, in fact, lived out the seventeenth century. And we have now arrived within nine years of the era when the critical editions started in hot succession to one another. The names we have mentioned were the great influential names of the century. But of inferior homage there was no end. How came Betterton the actor, how came Davenant, how came Rowe, or Pope, by their intense (if not always sound) admiration for Shakspeare, unless they had found it fuming upwards like incense to the Pagan deities in ancient times from altars erected at every turning upon all the paths of men?

But it is objected that inferior dramatists were sometimes preferred to Shakspeare; and again, that vile travesties of Shakspeare were preferred to the authentic dramas. As to the first argument, let it be remembered that if the saints of the chapel

are always in the same honour because *their* men are simply discharging a duty which, once due, will be due for ever, the saints of the theatre, on the other hand, must bend to the local genius, and to the very reasons for having a theatre at all. Men go thither for amusement; this is the paramount purpose, and even acknowledged merit or absolute superiority must give way to it. Does a man at Paris expect to see Molière reproduced in proportion to his admitted precedency in the French drama? On the contrary, that very precedency argues such a familiarisation with his works, that those who are in quest of relaxation will reasonably prefer any recent drama to that which, having lost all its novelty, has lost much of its excitement. We speak of ordinary minds; but in cases of *public* entertainments, deriving part of their power from scenery and stage pomp, novelty is for all minds an essential condition of attraction. Moreover, in some departments of the comic, Beaumont and Fletcher, when writing in combination, really had a freedom and breadth of manner which excels the comedy of Shakspeare. As to the altered Shakspeare as taking precedency of the genuine Shakspeare no argument can be so frivolous. The public were never allowed a choice; the great majority of an audience even now cannot be expected to carry the real Shakspeare in their mind, so as to pursue a comparison between that and the alteration. Their comparisons must be exclusively amongst what they have opportunities of seeing; that is, between the various pieces presented to them by the managers of theatres. Further than this it is impossible for them to extend their office of judging and collating; and the degenerate taste which substituted the caprices of Davenant, the rants of Dryden, or the filth of Tate, for the jewellery of Shakspeare, cannot with any justice be charged upon the public, not one in a thousand of whom was furnished with any means of comparing, but exclusively upon those (viz., theatrical managers) who had the very amplest. Yet even in excuse for *them* much may be said. The very length of some plays compelled them to make alterations. The best of Shakspeare's

dramas, "King Lear," is the least fitted for representation; and, even for the vilest alteration, it ought in candour to be considered that possession is nine points of the law. He who would not have introduced was often obliged to retain.

Finally, it is urged that the small number of editions through which Shakspeare passed in the seventeenth century, furnishes a separate argument, and a conclusive one, against his popularity. We answer, that considering the bulk of his plays collectively, the editions were *not* few; compared with any known case, the copies sold of Shakspeare were quite as many as could be expected under the circumstances. Ten or fifteen times as much consideration went to the purchase of one great folio like Shakspeare, as would attend the purchase of a little volume like Waller or Donne. Without reviews, or newspapers, or advertisements to diffuse the knowledge of books, the progress of literature was necessarily slow, and its expansion narrow. But this is a topic which has always been treated unfairly, not with regard to Shakspeare only, but to Milton, as well as many others. The truth is, we have not facts enough to guide us; for the number of editions often tells nothing accurately as to the number of copies. With respect to Shakspeare it is certain that, had his masterpieces been gathered into small volumes, Shakspeare would have had a most extensive sale. As it was, there can be no doubt that, from his own generation, throughout the seventeenth century, and until the eighteenth began to accommodate, not any greater popularity in *him*, but a greater taste for reading in the public, his fame never ceased to be viewed as a national trophy of honour; and the most illustrious men of the seventeenth century were no whit less fervent in their admiration than those of the eighteenth and the nineteenth, either as respected its strength and sincerity, or as respected its open profession.

It is therefore a false notion, that the general sympathy with the merits of Shakspeare ever beat with a languid or intermitting pulse. Undoubtedly, in times when the functions of critical journals and of newspapers were not at hand to diffuse or to

strengthen the impressions which emanated from the capital, all opinions must have travelled slowly into the provinces. But even then, whilst the perfect organs of communication were wanting, indirect substitutes were supplied by the necessities of the times, or by the instincts of political zeal. Two channels especially lay open between the great central organ of the national mind and the remotest provinces. Parliaments were occasionally summoned (for the judges' circuits were too brief to produce much effect), and during their longest suspensions the nobility, with large retinues, continually resorted to the Court. But an intercourse more constant and more comprehensive was maintained through the agency of the two universities. Already, in the time of James I., the growing importance of the gentry, and the consequent birth of a new interest in political questions, had begun to express itself at Oxford, and still more so at Cambridge. Academic persons stationed themselves as sentinels at London, for the purpose of watching the Court and the course of public affairs. These persons wrote letters, like those of the celebrated Joseph Mede, which we find in Ellis's Historical Collections, reporting to their fellow-collegians all the novelties of public life as they arose, or personally carried down such reports, and thus conducted the general feelings at the centre into lesser centres, from which again they were diffused into the ten thousand parishes of England; for (with a very few exceptions in favour of poor benefices, Welsh or Cumbrian) every parish priest must unavoidably have spent his three years at one or other of the English universities. And by this mode of diffusion it is that we can explain the strength with which Shâkspeare's thoughts and diction impressed themselves from a very early period upon the national literature, and even more generally upon the national thinking and conversation.[4]

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[4] See De Quincey's note in Masson's edition, concluding as follows: "The reinforcement of the general language by aids from the writings of Shakspeare had already commenced in the seventeenth century." Pp. 33–69 are here omitted.

After this review of Shakspeare's life it becomes our duty to take a summary survey of his works, of his intellectual powers, and of his station in literature — a station which is now irrevocably settled, not so much (which happens in other cases) by a vast over-balance of favourable suffrages, or by acclamation; not so much by the *voices* of those who admire him up to the verge of idolatry, as by the *acts* of those who everywhere seek for his works among the primal necessities of life, demand them, and crave them as they do their daily bread; not so much by eulogy openly proclaiming itself, as by the silent homage recorded in the endless multiplication of what he has bequeathed us; not so much by his own compatriots, who, with regard to almost every other author,[5] compose the total amount of his *effective* audience, as by the unanimous "All hail!" of intellectual Christendom; finally, not by the hasty partisanship of his own generation, nor by the biassed judgment of an age trained in the same modes of feeling and of thinking with himself, but by the solemn award of generation succeeding to generation, of one age correcting the obliquities or peculiarities of another; by the verdict of two hundred and thirty years, which have now elapsed since the very *latest* of his creations, or of two hundred and forty-seven years if we date from the earliest: a verdict which has been continually revived and re-opened, probed, searched, vexed, by criticism in every spirit, from the most genial and intelligent down to the most malignant and scurrilously hostile which feeble heads and great ignorance could suggest, when co-operating with impure hearts and narrow sensibilities; a verdict, in short, sustained and countersigned by a longer series of writers, many of them emi-

[5] "An exception ought perhaps to be made for Sir Walter Scott and Cervantes; but with regard to all other writers . . . it still remains true (and the very sale of the books is proof sufficient) that an alien author never does take root in the general sympathies out of his own country. He takes his station in libraries, he is read by the man of learned leisure, he is known and valued by the refined and the elegant, but he is not (what Shakspeare is for Germany and America) in any proper sense a *popular* favourite." — From DE QUINCEY'S note.

nent for wit or learning, than were ever before congregated upon any inquest relating to any author, be he who he might, ancient or modern, Pagan or Christian. It was a most witty saying with respect to a piratical and knavish publisher, who made a trade of insulting the memories of deceased authors by forged writings, that he was "among the new terrors of death." But in the gravest sense it may be affirmed of Shakspeare that he is among the modern luxuries of life; that life, in fact, is a new thing, and one more to be coveted, since Shakspeare has extended the domains of human consciousness, and pushed its dark frontiers into regions not so much as dimly descried or even suspected before his time, far less illuminated (as now they are) by beauty and tropical luxuriance of life. For instance — a single instance, indeed one which in itself is a world of new revelation — the possible beauty of the female character had not been seen as in a dream before Shakspeare called into perfect life the radiant shapes of Desdemona, of Imogen, of Hermione, of Perdita, of Ophelia, of Miranda, and many others. The Una of Spenser, earlier by ten or fifteen years than most of these, was an idealised portrait of female innocence and virgin purity, but too shadowy and unreal for a dramatic reality. And as to the Grecian classics, let not the reader imagine for an instant that any prototype in this field of Shakspearian power can be looked for there. The *Antigone* and the *Electra* of the tragic poets are the two leading female characters that classical antiquity offers to our respect, but assuredly not to our impassioned love, as disciplined and exalted in the school of Shakspeare. They challenge our admiration, severe, and even stern, as impersonations of filial duty, cleaving to the steps of a desolate and afflicted old man; or of sisterly affection, maintaining the rights of a brother under circumstances of peril, of desertion, and consequently of perfect self-reliance. Iphigenia, again, though not dramatically coming before us in her own person, but according to the beautiful report of a spectator, presents us with a fine statuesque model of heroic fortitude, and of one whose young heart, even in the very agonies

of her cruel immolation, refused to forget, by a single indecorous gesture, or so much as a moment's neglect of her own princely descent, that she herself was "a lady in the land." These are fine marble groups, but they are not the warm breathing realities of Shakspeare; there is "no speculation" in their cold marble eyes; the breath of life is not in their nostrils; the fine pulses of womanly sensibilities are not throbbing in their bosoms. And besides this immeasurable difference between the cold moony reflexes of life, as exhibited by the power of Grecian art, and the true sunny life of Shakspeare, it must be observed that the Antigones, &c., of the antique put forward but one single trait of character, like the aloe with its single blossom: this solitary feature is presented to us as an abstraction, and as an insulated quality; whereas in Shakspeare all is presented in the *concrete;* that is to say, not brought forward in relief, as by some effort of an anatomical artist, but embodied and imbedded, so to speak, as by the force of a creative nature, in the complex system of a human life; a life in which all the elements move and play simultaneously, and with something more than mere simultaneity or co-existence, acting and re-acting each upon the other — nay, even acting by each other and through each other. In Shakspeare's characters is felt for ever a real *organic* life, where each is for the whole and in the whole, and where the whole is for each and in each. They only are real incarnations.

The Greek poets could not exhibit any approximation to *female* character without violating the truth of Grecian life, and shocking the feelings of the audience. The drama with the Greeks, as with us, though much less than with us, was a picture of human life; and that which could not occur in life could not wisely be exhibited on the stage. Now, in ancient Greece, women were secluded from the society of men. The conventual sequestration of the γυναικωνίτις, or female apartment of the house, and the Mahommedan consecration of its threshold against the ingress of males, had been transplanted from Asia into Greece thousands of years perhaps before either convents or Mahommed existed. Thus barred from

all open social intercourse, women could not develop or express any character by word or action. Even to *have* a character, violated, to a Grecian mind, the ideal portrait of feminine excellence; whence, perhaps, partly the too generic, too little individualised, style of Grecian beauty. But prominently to *express* a character was impossible under the common tenor of Grecian life, unless when high tragical catastrophes transcended the decorums of that tenor, or for a brief interval raised the curtain which veiled it. Hence the subordinate part which women play upon the Greek stage in all but some half-dozen cases. In the paramount tragedy on that stage, the model tragedy, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles, there is virtually no woman at all; for Jocasta is a party to the story merely as the dead Laius or the self-murdered Sphinx was a party — viz., by her contributions to the fatalities of the event, not by anything she does or says spontaneously. In fact, the Greek poet, if a wise poet, could not address himself genially to a task in which he must begin by shocking the sensibilities of his countrymen. And hence followed, not only the dearth of female characters in the Grecian drama, but also a second result still more favourable to the sense of a new power evolved by Shakspeare. Whenever the common law of Grecian life did give way, it was, as we have observed, to the suspending force of some great convulsion or tragical catastrophe. This for a moment (like an earthquake in a nunnery) would set at liberty even the timid, fluttering Grecian women, those doves of the dove-cot, and would call some of them into action. But which? Precisely those of energetic and masculine minds; the timid and feminine would but shrink the more from public gaze and from tumult. Thus it happened that such female characters as *were* exhibited in Greece could not but be the harsh and the severe. If a gentle Ismene appeared for a moment in contest with some energetic sister Antigone (and chiefly, perhaps by way of drawing out the fiercer character of that sister), she was soon dismissed as unfit for scenical effect. So that not only were female characters few, but, moreover, of these few the majority were but repetitions of masculine qualities

in female persons. Female agency being seldom summoned on the stage except when it had received a sort of special dispensation from its sexual character, by some terrific convulsions of the house or the city, naturally it assumed the style of action suited to these circumstances. And hence it arose that not woman as she differed from man, but woman as she resembled man — woman, in short, seen under circumstances so dreadful as to abolish the effect of sexual distinction, was the woman of the Greek tragedy. And hence generally arose for Shakspeare the wider field, and the more astonishing by its perfect novelty, when he first introduced female characters, not as mere varieties or echoes of masculine characters, a Medea or Clytemnestra, or a vindictive Hecuba, the mere tigress of the tragic tiger, but female characters that had the appropriate beauty of female nature; woman no longer grand, terrific, and repulsive, but woman "after her kind" — the other hemisphere of the dramatic world; woman running through the vast gamut of womanly loveliness; woman as emancipated, exalted, ennobled, under a new law of Christian morality; woman the sister and coequal of man, no longer his slave, his prisoner, and sometimes his rebel. "It is a far cry to Loch Awe"; and from the Athenian stage to the stage of Shakspeare, it may be said, is a prodigious interval. True; but prodigious as it is, there is really nothing between them. The Roman stage, at least the tragic stage, as is well known, was put out, as by an extinguisher, by the cruel amphitheatre, just as a candle is made pale and ridiculous by daylight. Those who were fresh from the real murders of the bloody amphitheatre regarded with contempt the mimic murders of the stage. Stimulation too coarse and too intense had its usual effect in making the sensibilities callous. Christian emperors arose at length, who abolished the amphitheatre in its bloodier features. But by that time the genius of the tragic muse had long slept the sleep of death; and that muse had no resurrection until the age of Shakspeare. So that, notwithstanding a gulf of nineteen centuries and upwards separates Shakspeare from Euripides, the last of the surviving Greek tragedians, the one is still the nearest successor of

the other, just as Connaught and the islands in Clew Bay are next neighbours to America, although three thousand watery columns, each of a cubic mile in dimensions, divide them from each other.

A second reason which lends an emphasis of novelty and effective power to Shakspeare's female world, is a peculiar fact of contrast which exists between that and his corresponding world of men. Let us explain. The purpose and the intention of the Grecian stage was not primarily to develop human *character*, whether in men or in women; human *fates* were its object, great tragic situations under the mighty control of a vast cloudy destiny, dimly descried at intervals, and brooding over human life by mysterious agencies and for mysterious ends. Man, no longer the representative of an august *will* — man, the passion-puppet of fate, could not with any effect display what we call a character which is a distinction between man and man, emanating originally from the will, and expressing its determinations, moving under the large variety of human impulses. The will is the central pivot of character, and this was obliterated, thwarted, cancelled by the dark fatalism which brooded over the Grecian stage. That explanation will sufficiently clear up the reason why marked or complex variety of character was slighted by the great principles of the Greek tragedy. And every scholar who has studied that grand drama of Greece with feeling — that drama so magnificent, so regal, so stately — and who has thoughtfully investigated its principles and its difference from the English drama, will acknowledge that powerful and elaborate character — character, for instance, that could employ the fiftieth part of that profound analysis which has been applied to Hamlet, to Falstaff, to Lear, to Othello, and applied by Mrs. Jamieson so admirably to the full development of the Shakspearian heroines — would have been as much wasted, nay, would have been defeated, and interrupted the blind agencies of fate, just in the same way as it would injure the shadowy grandeur of a ghost to individualise it too much. Milton's angels are slightly touched, superficially touched, with differences of character, but they are such differences, so simple and general,

as are just sufficient to rescue them from the reproach applied to Virgil's "*fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthem*";[6] just sufficient to make them knowable apart. Pliny speaks of painters who painted in one or two colours; and, as respects the angelic characters, Milton does so — he is *monochromatic*. So, and for reasons resting upon the same ultimate philosophy, were the mighty architects of the Greek tragedy. They also were monochromatic; they also, as to the characters of their persons, painted in one colour. And so far there might have been the same novelty in Shakspeare's men as in his women. There *might* have been, but the reason why there is *not* must be sought in the fact that History, the muse of History, had there even been no such muse as Melpomene, would have forced us into an acquaintance with human character. History, as the representative of actual life, of real man, gives us powerful delineations of character in its chief agents — that is, in men; and therefore it is that Shakspeare, the absolute creator of female character, was but the mightiest of all painters with regard to male character. Take a single instance. The Antony of Shakspeare, immortal for its execution, is found, after all, as regards the primary conception, in history. Shakspeare's delineation is but the expansion of the germ already pre-existing, by way of scattered fragments, in Cicero's Philippics, in Cicero's Letters, in Appian, &c. But Cleopatra, equally fine, is a pure creation of art. The situation and the scenic circumstances belong to history, but the character belongs to Shakspeare.

In the great world therefore of woman, as the interpreter of the shifting phases and the lunar varieties of that mighty changeable planet, that lovely satellite of man, Shakspeare stands not the first only, not the original only, but is yet the sole authentic oracle of truth. Woman, therefore, the beauty of the female mind, *this* is one great field of his power. The supernatural world, the world of apparitions, *that* is another; for reasons which it would be easy to give, reasons emanating from the gross mythology of the ancients, no Grecian, no Roman, could have conceived a ghost.

[6] VIRGIL, *Æneid*, I. 222. Read *Cloanthum* for De Quincey's *Cloanthem*.

That shadowy conception, the protesting apparition, the awful projection of the human conscience, belongs to the Christian mind; and in all Christendom, who, let us ask, who, but Shakspeare, has found the power for effectually working this mysterious mode of being? In summoning back to earth "the majesty of buried Denmark," how like an awful necromancer does Shakspeare appear! All the pomps and grandeurs which religion, which the grave, which the popular superstition had gathered about the subject of apparitions, are here converted to his purpose, and bend to one awful effect. The wormy grave brought into antagonism with the scenting of the early dawn; the trumpet of resurrection suggested, and again as an antagonist idea to the crowing of the cock (a bird ennobled in the Christian mythus by the part he is made to play at the Crucifixion); its starting "as a guilty thing" placed in opposition to its majestic expression of offended dignity when struck at by the partisans of the sentinels; its awful allusions to the secrets of its prison-house; its ubiquity, contrasted with its local presence; its aerial substance, yet clothed in palpable armour; the heart-shaking solemnity of its language, and the appropriate scenery of its haunt — viz., the ramparts of a capital fortress, with no witnesses but a few gentlemen mounting guard at the dead of night: what a mist, what a *mirage* of vapour, is here accumulated, through which the dreadful being in the centre looms upon us in far larger proportions than could have happened had it been insulated and left naked of this circumstantial pomp! In the "Tempest," again, what new modes of life, preternatural, yet far as the poles from the spiritualities of religion! Ariel in antithesis to Caliban![7] What is most ethereal to what is most animal! A phantom of air, an abstraction of the dawn and of vesper sunlights, a bodiless sylph on the one hand; on the other a gross carnal monster, like the Miltonic Asmodai, "the fleshliest incubus" among the fiends, and yet so

[7] "Caliban has not yet been thoroughly fathomed. For all Shakspeare's great creations are, like works of nature, subjects of unexhaustible study." — De Quincey's note.

far ennobled into interest by his intellectual power, and by the grandeur of misanthropy! In the "Midsummer Night's Dream," again, we have the old traditional fairy, a lovely mode of preternatural life, remodified by Shakspeare's eternal talisman. Oberon and Titania remind us at first glance of Ariel; they approach, but how far they recede; they are like — "like, but oh, how different!" And in no other exhibition of this dreamy population of the moonlight forests and forest-lawns are the circumstantial proprieties of fairy life so exquisitely imagined, sustained, or expressed. The dialogue between Oberon and Titania is, of itself and taken separately from its connection, one of the most delightful poetic scenes that literature affords. The witches in "Macbeth" are another variety of supernatural life, in which Shakspeare's power to enchant and disenchant are alike portentous. The circumstances of the blasted heath, the army at a distance, the withered attire of the mysterious hags, and the choral litanies of their fiendish Sabbath, are as finely imagined in their kind as those which herald and which surround the ghost in "Hamlet." There we see the *positive* of Shakspeare's superior power. But now turn and look to the *negative*. At a time when the trials of witches, the royal book on demonology,[8] and popular superstition (all so far useful, as they prepared a basis of undoubting faith for the poet's serious use of such agencies) had degraded and polluted the ideas of these mysterious beings by many mean associations, Shakspeare does not fear to employ them in high tragedy (a tragedy, moreover, which, though not the very greatest of his efforts as an intellectual whole, nor as a struggle of passion, is *among* the greatest in any view, and positively *the* greatest for scenical grandeur, and in that respect makes the nearest approach of all English tragedies to the Grecian model); he does not fear to introduce, for the same appalling effect as that for which Æschylus introduced the Eumenides, a triad of old women, concerning whom an English wit has remarked this grotesque peculiarity in the popular creed of that day, that although potent

[8] The *Demonology* of James VI. of Scotland.

over winds and storms, in league with powers of darkness, they yet stood in awe of the constable; — yet, relying on his own supreme power to disenchant as well as to enchant, to create and to uncreate, he mixes these women and their dark machineries with the power of armies, with the agencies of kings, and the fortunes of martial kingdoms. Such was the sovereignty of this poet, so mighty its compass!

A third fund of Shakspeare's peculiar power lies in his teeming fertility of fine thoughts and sentiments. From his works alone might be gathered a golden bead-roll of thoughts the deepest, subtlest, most pathetic, and yet most catholic and universally intelligible; the most characteristic also, and appropriate to the particular person, the situation, and the case; yet at the same time applicable to the circumstances of every human being under all the accidents of life and all vicissitudes of fortune. But this subject offers so vast a field of observation, it being so eminently the prerogative of Shakspeare to have thought more finely and more extensively than all other poets combined, that we cannot wrong the dignity of such a theme by doing more, in our narrow limits, than simply noticing it as one of the emblazonries upon Shakspeare's shield.

Fourthly, we shall indicate, (and, as in the last case, barely indicate, without attempting in so vast a field to offer any inadequate illustrations) one mode of Shakspeare's dramatic excellence which hitherto has not attracted any special or separate notice. We allude to the forms of life and natural human passion as apparent in the structure of his dialogue. Among the many defects and infirmities of the French and of the Italian drama, indeed we may say of the Greek, the dialogue proceeds always by independent speeches, replying indeed to each other, but never modified in its several openings by the momentary effect of its several terminal forms immediately preceding. Now, in Shakspeare, who first set an example of that most important innovation, in all his impassioned dialogues each reply or rejoinder seems the mere rebound of the previous speech. Every form of natural

interruption breaking through the restraints of ceremony under the impulses of tempestuous passion; every form of hasty interrogative, ardent reiteration when a question has been evaded; every form of scornful repetition of the hostile words; every impatient continuation of the hostile statement; in short, all modes and formulæ by which anger, hurry, fretfulness, scorn, impatience, or excitement under any movement whatever, can disturb or modify or dislocate the formal bookish style of commencement, — these are as rife in Shakspeare's dialogue as in life itself; and how much vivacity, how profound a verisimilitude, they add to the scenic effect as an imitation of human passion and real life, we need not say. A volume might be written illustrating the vast varieties of Shakspeare's art and power in this one field of improvement; another volume might be dedicated to the exposure of the lifeless and unnatural result from the opposite practice in the foreign stages of France and Italy. And we may truly say, that were Shakspeare distinguished from them by this single feature of nature and propriety, he would on that account alone have merited a great immortality.

XXXII.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

(1800–1859.)

CRITICAL AND HISTORICAL ESSAYS.

The Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.[1]

[Written in 1840.]

We have a kindness for Mr. Leigh Hunt. We form our judgment of him, indeed, only from events of universal notoriety, from his own works, and from the works of other writers, who have generally abused him in the most rancorous manner. But, unless we are greatly mistaken, he is a very clever, a very honest, and a very good-natured man. We can clearly discern, together with many merits, many faults both in his writings and in his conduct. But we really think that there is hardly a man living whose merits have been so grudgingly allowed, and whose faults have been so cruelly expiated.

In some respects Mr. Leigh Hunt is excellently qualified for the task which he has now undertaken. His style, in spite of its mannerism, nay, partly by reason of its mannerism, is well suited for light, garrulous, desultory *ana*, half critical, half biographical. We do not always agree with his literary judgments; but we find in him what is very rare in our time, the power of justly appreciating and heartily enjoying good things of very different kinds. He can adore Shakspeare and Spenser without denying poetical

[1] From the *Edinburgh Review* for January, 1841. — *The Dramatic Works of* Wycherley, Congreve, Vanbrugh, *and* Farquhar, *with Biographical and Critical Notices.* By Leigh Hunt. 8vo. London: 1840.

genius to the author of *Alexander's Feast*, or fine observation, rich fancy, and exquisite humour to him who imagined Will Honeycomb and Sir Roger de Coverley. He has paid particular attention to the history of the English drama, from the age of Elizabeth down to our own time, and has every right to be heard with respect on that subject.

The plays to which he now acts as introducer are, with few exceptions, such as, in the opinion of many very respectable people, ought not to be reprinted. In this opinion we can by no means concur. We cannot wish that any work or class of works which has exercised a great influence on the human mind, and which illustrates the character of an important epoch in letters, politics, and morals, should disappear from the world. If we err in this matter, we err with the gravest men and bodies of men in the empire, and especially with the Church of England, and with the great schools of learning which are connected with her. The whole liberal education of our countrymen is conducted on the principle, that no book which is valuable, either by reason of the excellence of its style, or by reason of the light which it throws on the history, polity, and manners of nations, should be withheld from the student on account of its impurity. The Athenian Comedies, in which there are scarcely a hundred lines together without some passage of which Rochester would have been ashamed, have been reprinted at the Pitt Press, and the Clarendon Press, under the direction of Syndics and delegates appointed by the Universities, and have been illustrated with notes by reverend, very reverend, and right reverend commentators. Every year the most distinguished young men in the kingdom are examined by bishops and professors of divinity in such works as the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes and the Sixth Satire of Juvenal. There is certainly something a little ludicrous in the idea of a conclave of venerable fathers of the church praising and rewarding a lad on account of his intimate acquaintance with writings compared with which the loosest tale in Prior is modest. But, for our own part, we have no doubt that the greatest societies which direct the

education of the English gentry have herein judged wisely. It is unquestionable that an extensive acquaintance with ancient literature enlarges and enriches the mind. It is unquestionable that a man whose mind has been thus enlarged and enriched is likely to be far more useful to the state and to the church than one who is unskilled, or little skilled, in classical learning. On the other hand, we find it difficult to believe that, in a world so full of temptation as this, any gentleman whose life would have been virtuous if he had not read Aristophanes and Juvenal will be made vicious by reading them. A man who, exposed to all the influences of such a state of society as that in which we live, is yet afraid of exposing himself to the influences of a few Greek or Latin verses, acts, we think, much like the felon who begged the sheriffs to let him have an umbrella held over his head from the door of Newgate to the gallows, because it was a drizzling morning, and he was apt to take cold.

The virtue which the world wants is a healthful virtue, not a valetudinarian virtue, a virtue which can expose itself to the risks inseparable from all spirited exertion, not a virtue which keeps out of the common air for fear of infection, and eschews the common food as too stimulating. It would be indeed absurd to attempt to keep men from acquiring those qualifications which fit them to play their part in life with honour to themselves and advantage to their country, for the sake of preserving a delicacy which cannot be preserved, a delicacy which a walk from Westminster to the Temple is sufficient to destroy.

But we should be justly chargeable with gross inconsistency if, while we defend the policy which invites the youth of our country to study such writers as Theocritus and Catullus, we were to set up a cry against a new edition of *The Country Wife* or *The Way of the World*. The immoral English writers of the seventeenth century are indeed much less excusable than those of Greece and Rome. But the worst English writings of the seventeenth century are decent, compared with much that has been bequeathed to us by Greece and Rome. Plato, we have little doubt, was a much

better man than Sir George Etherege. But Plato has written things at which Sir George Etherege would have shuddered. Buckhurst and Sedley, even in those wild orgies at the Cock in Bow Street for which they were pelted by the rabble and fined by the Court of King's Bench, would never have dared to hold such discourse as passed between Socrates and Phædrus on that fine summer day under the plane-tree, while the fountain warbled at their feet, and the cicadas chirped overhead. If it be, as we think it is, desirable that an English gentleman should be well informed touching the government and the manners of little commonwealths which both in place and time are far removed from us, whose independence has been more than two thousand years extinguished, whose language has not been spoken for ages, and whose ancient magnificence is attested only by a few broken columns and friezes, much more must it be desirable that he should be intimately acquainted with the history of the public mind of his own country, and with the causes, the nature, and the extent of those revolutions of opinion and feeling which, during the last two centuries, have alternately raised and depressed the standard of our national morality. And knowledge of this sort is to be very sparingly gleaned from Parliamentary debates, from state papers, and from the works of grave historians. It must either not be acquired at all, or it must be acquired by the perusal of the light literature which has at various periods been fashionable. We are therefore by no means disposed to condemn this publication, though we certainly cannot recommend the handsome volume before us as an appropriate Christmas present for young ladies.

We have said that we think the present publication perfectly justifiable. But we can by no means agree with Mr. Leigh Hunt, who seems to hold that there is little or no ground for the charge of immorality so often brought against the literature of the Restoration. We do not blame him for not bringing to the judgment-seat the merciless rigour of Lord Angelo; but we really think that such flagitious and impudent offenders as those who are now at

the bar deserved at least the gentle rebuke of Escalus. Mr. Leigh Hunt treats the whole matter a little too much in the easy style of Lucio; and perhaps his exceeding lenity disposes us to be somewhat too severe.

And yet it is not easy to be too severe. For in truth this part of our literature is a disgrace to our language and our national character. It is clever, indeed, and very entertaining; but it is, in the most emphatic sense of the words, "earthly, sensual, devilish." Its indecency, though perpetually such as is condemned not less by the rules of good taste than by those of morality, is not, in our opinion, so disgraceful a fault as its singularly inhuman spirit. We have here Belial, not as when he inspired Ovid and Ariosto, "graceful and humane," but with the iron eye and cruel sneer of Mephistopheles. We find ourselves in a world, in which the ladies are like very profligate, impudent and unfeeling men, and in which the men are too bad for any place but Pandæmonium or Norfolk Island. We are surrounded by foreheads of bronze, hearts like the nether millstone, and tongues set on fire of hell.

Dryden defended or excused his own offences and those of his contemporaries by pleading the example of the earlier English dramatists; and Mr. Leigh Hunt seems to think that there is force in the plea. We altogether differ from this opinion. The crime charged is not mere coarseness of expression. The terms which are delicate in one age become gross in the next. The diction of the English version of the Pentateuch is sometimes such as Addison would not have ventured to imitate; and Addison, the standard of moral purity in his own age, used many phrases which are now proscribed. Whether a thing shall be designated by a plain noun substantive or by a circumlocution is mere matter of fashion. Morality is not at all interested in the question. But morality is deeply interested in this, that what is immoral shall not be presented to the imagination of the young and susceptible in constant connection with what is attractive. For every person who has observed the operation of the law of

association in his own mind and in the minds of others knows that whatever is constantly presented to the imagination in connection with what is attractive will itself become attractive. There is undoubtedly a great deal of indelicate writing in Fletcher and Massinger, and more than might be wished even in Ben Jonson and Shakspeare, who are comparatively pure. But it is impossible to trace in their plays any systematic attempt to associate vice with those things which men value most and desire most, and virtue with every thing ridiculous and degrading. And such a systematic attempt we find in the whole dramatic literature of the generation which followed the return of Charles the Second.[2] . . . .

Mr. Charles Lamb, indeed, attempted to set up a defence for this way of writing. The dramatists of the latter part of the seventeenth century are not, according to him, to be tried by the standard of morality which exists, and ought to exist in real life. Their world is a conventional world. Their heroes and heroines belong, not to England, not to Christendom, but to an Utopia of gallantry, to a Fairyland, where the Bible and Burn's Justice are unknown, where a prank which on this earth would be rewarded with the pillory is merely matter for a peal of elvish laughter. A real Horner, a real Careless, would, it is admitted, be exceedingly bad men. But to predicate morality or immorality of the Horner of Wycherley and the Careless of Congreve is as absurd as it would be to arraign a sleeper for his dreams. "They belong to the regions of pure comedy, where no cold moral reigns. When we are among them we are among a chaotic people. We are not to judge them by our usages. No reverend institutions are insulted by their proceedings, for they have none among them. No peace of families is violated, for no family ties exist among them. There is neither right nor wrong, gratitude or its opposite, claim or duty, paternity or sonship."

This is, we believe, a fair summary of Mr. Lamb's doctrine. We are sure that we do not wish to represent him unfairly. For

[2] MACAULAY illustrates his statements by reference to characters in the plays of Dryden, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Farquhar, and Congreve.

we admire his genius; we love the kind nature which appears in all his writings; and we cherish his memory as much as if we had known him personally. But we must plainly say that his argument, though ingenious, is altogether sophistical.

Of course we perfectly understand that it is possible for a writer to create a conventional world in which things forbidden by the Decalogue and the Statute Book shall be lawful, and yet that the exhibition may be harmless, or even edifying. For example, we suppose that the most austere critics would not accuse Fenelon of impiety and immorality on account of his *Telemachus* and his *Dialogues of the Dead*. In *Telemachus* and the *Dialogues of the Dead* we have a false religion, and consequently a morality which is in some points incorrect. We have a right and a wrong differing from the right and the wrong of real life. It is represented as the first duty of men to pay honour to Jove and Minerva. Philocles, who employs his leisure in making graven images of these deities, is extolled for his piety in a way which contrasts singularly with the expressions of Isaiah on the same subject. The dead are judged by Minos, and rewarded with lasting happiness for actions which Fenelon would have been the first to pronounce splendid sins. The same may be said of Mr. Southey's Mahommedan and Hindoo heroes and heroines. In *Thalaba*, to speak in derogation of the Arabian impostor is blasphemy: to drink wine is a crime: to perform ablutions and to pay honour to the holy cities are works of merit. In the *Curse of Kehama*, Kailyal is commended for her devotion to the statue of Mariataly, the goddess of the poor. But certainly no person will accuse Mr. Southey of having promoted or intended to promote either Islamism or Brahminism.

It is easy to see why the conventional worlds of Fenelon and Mr. Southey are unobjectionable. In the first place, they are utterly unlike the real world in which we live. The state of society, the laws even of the physical world, are so different from those with which we are familiar, that we cannot be shocked at finding the morality also very different. But in truth the morality

of these conventional worlds differs from the morality of the real world only in points where there is no danger that the real world will ever go wrong. The generosity and docility of Telemachus, the fortitude, the modesty, the filial tenderness of Kailyal, are virtues of all ages and nations. And there was very little danger that the Dauphin would worship Minerva, or that an English damsel would dance, with a bucket on her head, before the statue of Mariataly.

The case is widely different with what Mr. Charles Lamb calls the conventional world of Wycherley and Congreve. Here the garb, the manners, the topics of conversation are those of the real town and of the passing day. The hero is in all superficial accomplishments exactly the fine gentleman whom every youth in the pit would gladly resemble. The heroine is the fine lady whom every youth in the pit would gladly marry. The scene is laid in some place which is as well known to the audience as their own houses, in St. James's Park, or Hyde Park, or Westminster Hall. The lawyer bustles about with his bag, between the Common Pleas and the Exchequer. The Peer calls for his carriage to go to the House of Lords on a private bill. A hundred little touches are employed to make the fictitious world appear like the actual world. And the immorality is of a sort which never can be out of date, and which all the force of religion, law, and public opinion united can but imperfectly restrain.

In the name of art, as well as in the name of virtue, we protest against the principle that the world of pure comedy is one into which no moral enters. If comedy be an imitation, under whatever conventions, of real life, how is it possible that it can have no reference to the great rule which directs life, and to feelings which are called forth by every incident of life? If what Mr. Charles Lamb says were correct, the inference would be that these dramatists did not in the least understand the very first principles of their craft. Pure landscape-painting into which no light or shade enters, pure portrait-painting into which no expression enters, are phrases less at variance with sound criticism than pure comedy into which no moral enters.

But it is not the fact that the world of these dramatists is a world into which no moral enters. Morality constantly enters into that world, a sound morality, and an unsound morality; the sound morality to be insulted, derided, associated with every thing mean and hateful; the unsound morality to be set off to every advantage, and inculcated by all methods, direct and indirect. It is not the fact that none of the inhabitants of this conventional world feel reverence for sacred institutions and family ties. Fondlewife, Pinchwife, every person in short of narrow understanding and disgusting manners, expresses that reverence strongly. The heroes and heroines, too, have a moral code of their own, an exceedingly bad one, but not, as Mr. Charles Lamb seems to think, a code existing only in the imagination of dramatists. It is, on the contrary, a code actually received and obeyed by great numbers of people. We need not go to Utopia or Fairyland to find them. They are near at hand. Every night some of them cheat at the hells in the Quadrant, and others pace the Piazza in Covent Garden. Without flying to Nephelococcygia or to the Court of Queen Mab, we can meet with sharpers, bullies, hard-hearted impudent debauchees, and women worthy of such paramours. The morality of *The Country Wife* and *The Old Bachelor* is the morality, not, as Mr. Charles Lamb maintains, of an unreal world, but of a world which is a great deal too real. It is the morality, not of a chaotic people, but of low town-rakes, and of those ladies whom the newspapers call "dashing Cyprians." And the question is simply this, whether a man of genius who constantly and systematically endeavours to make this sort of character attractive, by uniting it with beauty, grace, dignity, spirit, a high social position, popularity, literature, wit, taste, knowledge of the world, brilliant success in every undertaking, does or does not make an ill use of his powers. We own that we are unable to understand how this question can be answered in any way but one.

It must, indeed, be acknowledged, in justice to the writers of whom we have spoken thus severely, that they were, to a great extent, the creatures of their age. And if it be asked why that

age encouraged immorality which no other age would have tolerated, we have no hesitation in answering that this great depravation of the national taste was the effect of the prevalence of Puritanism under the Commonwealth.

To punish public outrages on morals and religion is unquestionably within the competence of rulers. But when a government, not content with requiring decency, requires sanctity, it oversteps the bounds which mark its proper functions. And it may be laid down as a universal rule that a government which attempts more than it ought will perform less. A lawgiver who, in order to protect distressed borrowers, limits the rate of interest, either makes it impossible for the objects of his care to borrow at all, or places them at the mercy of the worst class of usurers. A lawgiver who, from tenderness for labouring men, fixes the hours of their work and the amount of their wages, is certain to make them far more wretched than he found them. And so a government which, not content with repressing scandalous excesses, demands from its subjects fervent and austere piety, will soon discover that, while attempting to render an impossible service to the cause of virtue, it has in truth only promoted vice.

For what are the means by which a government can effect its ends? Two only, reward and punishment; powerful means, indeed, for influencing the exterior act, but altogether impotent for the purpose of touching the heart. A public functionary who is told that he will be promoted if he is a devout Catholic, and turned out of his place if he is not, will probably go to mass every morning, exclude meat from his table on Fridays, shrive himself regularly, and perhaps let his superiors know that he wears a hair shirt next his skin. Under a Puritan government, a person who is apprised that piety is essential to thriving in the world will be strict in the observance of the Sunday, or, as he will call it, Sabbath, and will avoid a theatre as if it were plague-stricken. Such a show of religion as this the hope of gain and the fear of loss will produce, at a week's notice, in any abundance which a government may require. But under this show, sensu-

ality, ambition, avarice, and hatred retain unimpaired power, and the seeming convert has only added to the vices of a man of the world all the still darker vices which are engendered by the constant practice of dissimulation. The truth cannot be long concealed. The public discovers that the grave persons who are proposed to it as patterns are more utterly destitute of moral principle and of moral sensibility than avowed libertines. It sees that these Pharisees are farther removed from real goodness than publicans and harlots. And, as usual, it rushes to the extreme opposite to that which it quits. It considers a high religious profession as a sure mark of meanness and depravity. On the very first day on which the restraint of fear is taken away, and on which men can venture to say what they think, a frightful peal of blasphemy and ribaldry proclaims that the short-sighted policy which aimed at making a nation of saints has made a nation of scoffers.

It was thus in France about the beginning of the eighteenth century. Lewis the Fourteenth in his old age became religious; he determined that his subjects should be religious too: he shrugged his shoulders and knitted his brows if he observed at his levee or near his dinner-table any gentleman who neglected the duties enjoined by the church, and rewarded piety with blue ribands, invitations to Marli, governments, pensions, and regiments. Forthwith Versailles became, in every thing but dress, a convent. The pulpits and confessionals were surrounded by swords and embroidery. The Marshals of France were much in prayer; and there was hardly one among the Dukes and Peers who did not carry good little books in his pocket, fast during Lent, and communicate at Easter. Madame de Maintenon, who had a great share in the blessed work, boasted that devotion had become quite the fashion. A fashion indeed it was; and like a fashion it passed away. No sooner had the old king been carried to St. Denis than the whole court unmasked. Every man hastened to indemnify himself, by the excess of licentiousness and impudence, for years of mortification. The same persons who,

a few months before, with meek voices and demure looks, had consulted divines about the state of their souls, now surrounded the midnight table where, amidst the bounding of champagne corks, a drunken prince, enthroned between Dubois and Madame de Parabère, hiccoughed out atheistical arguments and obscene jests. The early part of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth had been a time of license; but the most dissolute men of that generation would have blushed at the orgies of the Regency.

It was the same with our fathers in the time of the Great Civil War. We are by no means unmindful of the great debt which mankind owes to the Puritans of that time, the deliverers of England, the founders of the American Commonwealths. But in the day of their power, those men committed one great fault, which left deep and lasting traces in the national character and manners. They mistook the end and overrated the force of government. They determined, not merely to protect religion and public morals from insult, an object for which the civil sword, in discreet hands, may be beneficially employed, but to make the people committed to their rule truly devout. Yet, if they had only reflected on events which they had themselves witnessed and in which they had themselves borne a great part, they would have seen what was likely to be the result of their enterprise. They had lived under a government which, during a long course of years, did all that could be done, by lavish bounty and by rigorous punishment, to enforce conformity to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England. No person suspected of hostility to that Church had the smallest chance of obtaining favour at the court of Charles. Avowed dissent was punished by imprisonment, by ignominious exposure, by cruel mutilations, and by ruinous fines. And the event had been that the Church had fallen, and had, in its fall, dragged down with it a monarchy which had stood six hundred years. The Puritan might have learned, if from nothing else, yet from his own recent victory, that governments which attempt things beyond their reach are likely not merely to fail, but to produce an effect directly the opposite of that which they contemplate as desirable.

All this was overlooked. The saints were to inherit the earth. The theatres were closed. The fine arts were placed under absurd restraints. Vices which had never before been even misdemeanors were made capital felonies. It was solemnly resolved by Parliament "that no person shall be employed but such as the House shall be satisfied of his real godliness." The pious assembly had a Bible lying on the table for reference. If they had consulted it they might have learned that the wheat and the tares grow together inseparably, and must either be spared together or rooted up together. To know whether a man was really godly was impossible. But it was easy to know whether he had a plain dress, lank hair, no starch in his linen, no gay furniture in his house; whether he talked through his nose, and showed the whites of his eyes; whether he named his children Assurance, Tribulation, and Maher-shalal-hash-baz; whether he avoided Spring Garden when in town, abstained from hunting and hawking when in the country; whether he expounded hard scriptures to his troop of dragoons, and talked in a committee of ways and means about seeking the Lord. These were tests which could easily be applied. The misfortune was that they were tests which proved nothing. Such as they were, they were employed by the dominant party. And the consequence was that a crowd of impostors, in every walk of life, began to mimic and to caricature what were then regarded as the outward signs of sanctity. The nation was not duped. The restraints of that gloomy time were such as would have been impatiently borne, if imposed by men who were universally believed to be saints. Those restraints became altogether insupportable when they were known to be kept up for the profit of hypocrites. It is quite certain that, even if the royal family had never returned, even if Richard Cromwell or Henry Cromwell had been at the head of the administration, there would have been a great relaxation of manners. Before the Restoration many signs indicated that a period of license was at hand. The Restoration crushed for a time the Puritan party, and placed supreme power in the hands of a libertine. The political counter-revolu-

tion assisted the moral counter-revolution, and was in turn assisted by it. A period of wild and desperate dissoluteness followed. Even in remote manor-houses and hamlets the change was in some degree felt; but in London the outbreak of debauchery was appalling; and in London the places most deeply infected were the Palace, the quarters inhabited by the aristocracy, and the Inns of Court. It was on the support of these parts of the town that the play-houses depended. The character of the drama became conformed to the character of its patrons. The comic poet was the mouthpiece of the most deeply corrupted part of a corrupted society. And in the plays before us we find, distilled and condensed, the essential spirit of the fashionable world during the Anti-puritan reaction.

The Puritan had affected formality; the comic poet laughed at decorum. The Puritan had frowned at innocent diversions; the comic poet took under his patronage the most flagitious excesses. The Puritan had canted; the comic poet blasphemed. The Puritan had made an affair of gallantry felony without benefit of clergy; the comic poet represented it as an honourable distinction. The Puritan spoke with disdain of the low standard of popular morality; his life was regulated by a far more rigid code; his virtue was sustained by motives unknown to men of the world. Unhappily it had been amply proved in many cases, and might well be suspected in many more, that these high pretensions were unfounded. Accordingly, the fashionable circles, and the comic poets who were the spokesmen of those circles, took up the notion that all professions of piety and integrity were to be construed by the rule of contrary; that it might well be doubted whether there was such a thing as virtue in the world; but that, at all events, a person who affected to be better than his neighbours was sure to be a knave.

In the old drama there had been much that was reprehensible. But whoever compares even the least decorous plays of Fletcher with those contained in the volume before us will see how much the profligacy which follows a period of overstrained austerity

goes beyond the profligacy which precedes such a period. The nation resembled the demoniac in the New Testament. The Puritans boasted that the unclean spirit was cast out. The house was empty, swept, and garnished; and for a time the expelled tenant wandered through dry places seeking rest and finding none. But the force of the exorcism was spent. The fiend returned to his abode; and returned not alone. He took to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself. They entered in, and dwelt together: and the second possession was worse than the first.[3]

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We pass a very severe censure on Wycherley, when we say that it is a relief to turn from him to Congreve. Congreve's writings, indeed, are by no means pure; nor was he, as far as we are able to judge, a warm-hearted or high-minded man. Yet, in coming to him, we feel that the worst is over, that we are one remove further from the Restoration, that we are past the Nadir of national taste and morality.

William Congreve was born in 1670, at Bardsey, in the neighbourhood of Leeds. His father, a younger son of a very ancient Staffordshire family, had distinguished himself among the cavaliers in the civil war, was set down after the Restoration for the Order of the Royal Oak, and subsequently settled in Ireland, under the patronage of the Earl of Burlington.

Congreve passed his childhood and youth in Ireland. He was sent to school at Kilkenny, and thence went to the University of Dublin. His learning does great honour to his instructors. From his writings it appears, not only that he was well acquainted with Latin literature, but that his knowledge of the Greek poets was such as was not, in his time, common even in a college.

When he had completed his academical studies, he was sent to London to study the law, and was entered of the Middle Temple. He troubled himself, however, very little about pleading or conveyancing, and gave himself up to literature and society. Two kinds of ambition early took possession of his mind, and often

[3] Macaulay's criticism of Wycherley is omitted.

pulled it in opposite directions. He was conscious of great fertility of thought and power of ingenious combination. His lively conversation, his polished manners, and his highly respectable connections, had obtained for him ready access to the best company. He longed to be a great writer. He longed to be a man of fashion. Either object was within his reach. But could he secure both? Was there not something vulgar in letters, something inconsistent with the easy apathetic graces of the man of the mode? Was it aristocratical to be confounded with creatures who lived in the cocklofts of Grub Street, to bargain with publishers, to hurry printers' devils and be hurried by them, to squabble with managers, to be applauded or hissed by pit, boxes, and galleries? Could he forego the renown of being the first wit of his age? Could he attain that renown without sullying what he valued quite as much, his character for gentility? The history of his life is the history of a conflict between these two impulses. In his youth the desire of literary fame had the mastery; but soon the meaner ambition overpowered the higher, and obtained supreme dominion over his mind.

His first work, a novel of no great value, he published under the assumed name of Cleophil. His second was *The Old Bachelor*, acted in 1693, a play inferior indeed to his other comedies, but, in his own line, inferior to them alone. The plot is equally destitute of interest and of probability. The characters are either not distinguishable, or are distinguished only by peculiarities of the most glaring kind. But the dialogue is resplendent with wit and eloquence, which indeed are so abundant that the fool comes in for an ample share, and yet preserves a certain colloquial air, a certain indescribable ease, of which Wycherley had given no example, and which Sheridan in vain attempted to imitate. The author, divided between pride and shame, pride at having written a good play, and shame at having done an ungentlemanlike thing, pretended that he had merely scribbled a few scenes for his own amusement, and affected to yield unwillingly to the importunities of those who pressed him to try his fortune on the stage. *The*

Old Bachelor was seen in manuscript by Dryden, one of whose best qualities was a hearty and generous admiration for the talents of others. He declared that he had never read such a first play, and lent his services to bring it into a form fit for representation. Nothing was wanted to the success of the piece. It was so cast as to bring into play all the comic talent, and to exhibit on the boards in one view all the beauty, which Drury Lane Theatre, then the only theatre in London, could assemble. The result was a complete triumph ; and the author was gratified with rewards more substantial than the applauses of the pit. Montagu, then a lord of the treasury, immediately gave him a place, and, in a short time, added the reversion of another place of much greater value, which, however, did not become vacant till many years had elapsed.

In 1694, Congreve brought out *The Double Dealer*, a comedy in which all the powers which had produced *The Old Bachelor* showed themselves, matured by time and improved by exercise. But the audience was shocked by the characters of Maskwell and Lady Touchwood. And, indeed, there is something strangely revolting in the way in which a group that seems to belong to the house of Laius or of Pelops is introduced into the midst of the Brisks, Froths, Carelesses, and Plyants. The play was unfavourably received. Yet, if the praise of distinguished men could compensate an author for the disapprobation of the multitude, Congreve had no reason to repine. Dryden, in one of the most ingenious, magnificent, and pathetic pieces that he ever wrote, extolled the author of *The Double Dealer* in terms which now appear extravagantly hyperbolical. Till Congreve came forth, — so ran this exquisite flattery, — the superiority of the poets who preceded the civil wars was acknowledged.

> "Theirs was the giant race before the flood."

Since the return of the Royal House, much art and ability had been exerted, but the old masters had been still unrivalled.

> "Our builders were with want of genius curst,
> The second temple was not like the first."

At length a writer had arisen who, just emerging from boyhood, had surpassed the authors of *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, and of *The Silent Woman*, and who had only one rival left to contend with.

> "Heaven, that but once was prodigal before,
> To Shakspeare gave as much, she could not give him more."

Some lines near the end of the poem are singularly graceful and touching, and sank deep into the heart of Congreve.

> "Already am I worn with cares and age,
> And just abandoning the ungrateful stage;
> But you, whom every Muse and Grace adorn,
> Whom I foresee to better fortune born,
> Be kind to my remains; and, oh, defend
> Against your judgment your departed friend.
> Let not the insulting foe my fame pursue,
> But guard those laurels which descend to you."

The crowd, as usual, gradually came over to the opinion of the men of note; and *The Double Dealer* was before long quite as much admired, though perhaps never so much liked, as *The Old Bachelor*.

In 1695 appeared *Love for Love*, superior both in wit and in scenic effect to either of the preceding plays. It was performed at a new theatre which Betterton and some other actors, disgusted by the treatment which they had received in Drury Lane, had just opened in a tennis-court near Lincoln's Inn. Scarcely any comedy within the memory of the oldest man had been equally successful. The actors were so elated that they gave Congreve a share in their theatre; and he promised in return to furnish them with a play every year, if his health would permit. Two years passed, however, before he produced *The Mourning Bride*, a play which, paltry as it is when compared, we do not say, with *Lear* or *Macbeth*, but with the best dramas of Massinger and Ford, stands very high among the tragedies of the age in which it was written. To find any thing so good we must go twelve years back to

Venice Preserved, or six years forward to *The Fair Penitent*. The noble passage which Johnson, both in writing and in conversation, extolled above any other in the English drama, has suffered greatly in the public estimation from the extravagance of his praise. Had he contented himself with saying that it was finer than any thing in the tragedies of Dryden, Otway, Lee, Rowe, Southern, Hughes, and Addison, than any thing, in short, that had been written for the stage since the days of Charles the First, he would not have been in the wrong.

The success of *The Mourning Bride* was even greater than that of *Love for Love*. Congreve was now allowed to be the first tragic, as well as the first comic dramatist of his time; and all this at twenty-seven. We believe that no English writer except Lord Byron has, at so early an age, stood so high in the estimation of his contemporaries.

At this time took place an event which deserves, in our opinion, a very different sort of notice from that which has been bestowed on it by Mr. Leigh Hunt. The nation had now nearly recovered from the demoralizing effect of the Puritan austerity. The gloomy follies of the reign of the Saints were but faintly remembered. The evils produced by profaneness and debauchery were recent and glaring. The Court, since the Revolution, had ceased to patronise licentiousness. Mary was strictly pious; and the vices of the cold, stern, and silent William, were not obtruded on the public eye. Discountenanced by the government, and falling in the favour of the people, the profligacy of the Restoration still maintained its ground in some parts of society. Its strongholds were the places where men of wit and fashion congregated, and above all, the theatres. At this conjuncture arose a great reformer whom, widely as we differ from him in many important points, we can never mention without respect.

Jeremy Collier was a clergyman of the Church of England, bred at Cambridge. His talents and attainments were such as might have been expected to raise him to the highest honours of his profession. He had an extensive knowledge of books; yet he

had mingled much with polite society, and is said not to have wanted either grace or vivacity in conversation. There were few branches of literature to which he had not paid some attention. But ecclesiastical antiquity was his favourite study. In religious opinions he belonged to that section of the Church of England which lies furthest from Geneva and nearest to Rome. His notions touching Episcopal government, holy orders, the efficacy of the sacraments, the authority of the Fathers, the guilt of schism, the importance of vestments, ceremonies, and solemn days, differed little from those which are now held by Dr. Pusey and Mr. Newman. Towards the close of his life, indeed, Collier took some steps which brought him still nearer to Popery, mixed water with the wine in the Eucharist, made the sign of the cross in confirmation, employed oil in the visitation of the sick, and offered up prayers for the dead. His politics were of a piece with his divinity. He was a Tory of the highest sort, such as in the cant of his age was called a Tantivy. Not even the persecution of the bishops and the spoliation of the universities could shake his steady loyalty. While the Convention was sitting, he wrote with vehemence in defence of the fugitive king, and was in consequence arrested. But his dauntless spirit was not to be so tamed. He refused to take the oaths, renounced all his preferments, and, in a succession of pamphlets written with much violence and with some ability, attempted to excite the nation against its new masters. In 1692, he was again arrested on suspicion of having been concerned in a treasonable plot. So unbending were his principles that his friends could hardly persuade him to let them bail him; and he afterwards expressed his remorse for having been induced thus to acknowledge, by implication, the authority of an usurping government. He was soon in trouble again. Sir John Friend and Sir William Parkins were tried and convicted of high treason for planning the murder of King William. Collier administered spiritual consolation to them, attended them to Tyburn, and, just before they were turned off, laid his hands on their heads, and by the authority which he derived from Christ, solemnly absolved them. This scene gave

indescribable scandal. Tories joined with Whigs in blaming the conduct of the daring priest. Some acts, it was said, which fall under the definition of treason are such that a good man may, in troubled times, be led into them even by his virtues. It may be necessary for the protection of society to punish such a man. But even in punishing him we consider him as legally rather than morally guilty, and hope that his honest error, though it cannot be pardoned here, will not be counted to him for sin hereafter. But such was not the case of Collier's penitents. They were concerned in a plot for waylaying and butchering, in an hour of security, one who, whether he were or were not their king, was at all events their fellow-creature. Whether the Jacobite theory about the rights of governments and the duties of subjects were or were not well founded, assassination must always be considered as a great crime. It is condemned even by the maxims of worldly honour and morality. Much more must it be an object of abhorrence to the pure Spouse of Christ. The Church cannot surely, without the saddest and most mournful forebodings, see one of her children who has been guilty of this great wickedness pass into eternity without any sign of repentance. That these traitors had given any sign of repentance was not alleged. It might be that they had privately declared their contrition; and, if so, the minister of religion might be justified in privately assuring them of the Divine forgiveness. But a public remission ought to have been preceded by a public atonement. The regret of these men, if expressed at all, had been expressed in secret. The hands of Collier had been laid on them in the presence of thousands. The inference which his enemies drew from his conduct was that he did not consider the conspiracy against the life of William as sinful. But this inference he very vehemently, and, we doubt not, very sincerely denied.

The storm raged. The bishops put forth a solemn censure of the absolution. The Attorney-General brought the matter before the Court of King's Bench. Collier had now made up his mind not to give bail for his appearance before any court which derived its

authority from the usurper. He accordingly absconded and was outlawed. He survived these events about thirty years. The prosecution was not pressed; and he was soon suffered to resume his literary pursuits in quiet. At a later period, many attempts were made to shake his perverse integrity by offers of wealth and dignity, but in vain. When he died, towards the end of the reign of George the First, he was still under the ban of the law.

We shall not be suspected of regarding either the politics or the theology of Collier with partiality; but we believe him to have been as honest and courageous a man as ever lived. We will go further, and say that, though passionate and often wrong-headed, he was a singularly fair controversialist, candid, generous, too high-spirited to take mean advantages even in the most exciting disputes, and pure from all taint of personal malevolence. It must also be admitted that his opinions on ecclesiastical and political affairs, though in themselves absurd and pernicious, eminently qualified him to be the reformer of our lighter literature. The libertinism of the press and of the stage was, as we have said, the effect of a reaction against the Puritan strictness. Profligacy was, like the oak leaf of the twenty-ninth of May, the badge of a cavalier and a high churchman. Decency was associated with conventicles and calves' heads. Grave prelates were too much disposed to wink at the excesses of a body of zealous and able allies who covered Roundheads and Presbyterians with ridicule. If a Whig raised his voice against the impiety and licentiousness of the fashionable writers, his mouth was instantly stopped by the retort: — You are one of those who groan at a light quotation from Scripture, and raise estates out of the plunder of the Church, who shudder at a *double entendre*, and chop off the heads of kings. A Baxter, a Burnet, even a Tillotson, would have done little to purify our literature. But when a man fanatical in the cause of episcopacy and actually under outlawry for his attachment to hereditary right, came forward as the champion of decency, the battle was already half won.

In 1698, Collier published his *Short View of the Profaneness and*

Immorality of the English Stage, a book which threw the whole literary world into commotion, but which is now much less read than it deserves. The faults of the work, indeed, are neither few nor small. The dissertations on the Greek and Latin drama do not at all help the argument, and, whatever may have been thought of them by the generation which fancied that Christ Church had refuted Bentley, are such as, in the present day, a scholar of very humble pretensions may venture to pronounce boyish, or rather babyish. The censures are not sufficiently discriminating. The authors whom Collier accused had been guilty of such gross sins against decency that he was certain to weaken instead of strengthening his case, by introducing into his charge against them any matter about which there could be the smallest dispute. He was, however, so injudicious as to place among the outrageous offences which he justly arraigned, some things which are really quite innocent, and some slight instances of levity which, though not perhaps strictly correct, could easily be paralleled from the works of writers who had rendered great services to morality and religion. Thus he blames Congreve, the number and gravity of whose real transgressions made it quite unnecessary to tax him with any that were not real, for using the words "martyr" and "inspiration" in a light sense; as if an archbishop might not say that a speech was inspired by claret, or that an alderman was a martyr to the gout. Sometimes, again, Collier does not sufficiently distinguish between the dramatist and the persons of the drama. Thus he blames Vanbrugh for putting into Lord Foppington's mouth some contemptuous expressions respecting the Church service; though it is obvious that Vanbrugh could not better express reverence than by making Lord Foppington express contempt. There is also throughout the *Short View* too strong a display of professional feeling. Collier is not content with claiming for his order an immunity from indiscriminate scurrility; he will not allow that, in any case, any word or act of a divine can be a proper subject for ridicule. Nor does he confine this benefit of clergy to the ministers of the Established

Church. He extends the privilege to Catholic priests, and, what in him is more surprising, to Dissenting preachers. This, however, is a mere trifle. Imaums, Brahmins, priests of Jupiter, priests of Baal, are all to be held sacred. Dryden is blamed for making the Mufti in *Don Sebastian* talk nonsense. Lee is called to a severe account for his incivility to Tiresias. But the most curious passage is that in which Collier resents some uncivil reflections thrown by Cassandra, in Dryden's *Cleomenes*, on the calf Apis and his hierophants. The words "grass-eating, foddered god," words which really are much in the style of several passages in the Old Testament, give as much offence to this Christian divine as they could have given to the priests of Memphis.

But, when all deductions have been made, great merit must be allowed to this work. There is hardly any book of that time from which it would be possible to select specimens of writing so excellent and so various. To compare Collier with Pascal would indeed be absurd. Yet we hardly know where, except in the *Provincial Letters*, we can find mirth so harmoniously and becomingly blended with solemnity as in the *Short View*. In truth, all the modes of ridicule, from broad fun to polished and antithetical sarcasm, were at Collier's command. On the other hand, he was complete master of the rhetoric of honest indignation. We scarcely know any volume which contains so many bursts of that peculiar eloquence which comes from the heart and goes to the heart. Indeed the spirit of the book is truly heroic. In order fairly to appreciate it, we must remember the situation in which the writer stood. He was under the frown of power. His name was already a mark for the invectives of one half of the writers of the age, when, in the cause of good taste, good sense, and good morals, he gave battle to the other half. Strong as his political prejudices were, he seems on this occasion to have entirely laid them aside. He has forgotten that he is a Jacobite, and remembers only that he is a citizen and a Christian. Some of his sharpest censures are directed against poetry which had been hailed with delight by the Tory party, and had inflicted a deep

wound on the Whigs. It is inspiriting to see how gallantly the solitary outlaw advances to attack enemies, formidable separately, and, it might have been thought, irresistible when combined, distributes his swashing blows right and left among Wycherley, Congreve, and Vanbrugh, treads the wretched D'Urfey down in the dirt beneath his feet, and strikes with all his strength full at the towering crest of Dryden.

The effect produced by the *Short View* was immense. The nation was on the side of Collier. But it could not be doubted that in the great host which he had defied, some champion would be found to lift the gauntlet. The general belief was that Dryden would take the field; and all the wits anticipated a sharp contest between two well-paired combatants. The great poet had been singled out in the most marked manner. It was well known that he was deeply hurt, that much smaller provocations had formerly roused him to violent resentment, and that there was no literary weapon, offensive or defensive, of which he was not master. But his conscience smote him; he stood abashed, like the fallen archangel at the rebuke of Zephon, —

> "And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
> Virtue in her shape how lovely; saw and pined
> His loss."

At a later period he mentioned the *Short View* in the preface to his *Fables*. He complained, with some asperity, of the harshness with which he had been treated, and urged some matters in mitigation. But, on the whole, he frankly acknowledged that he had been justly reproved. "If," said he, "Mr. Collier be my enemy, let him triumph. If he be my friend, as I have given him no personal occasion to be otherwise, he will be glad of my repentance."

It would have been wise in Congreve to follow his master's example. He was precisely in that situation in which it is madness to attempt a vindication; for his guilt was so clear that no address or eloquence could obtain an acquittal. On the other hand, there were in his case many extenuating circumstances

which, if he had acknowledged his error and promised amendment, would have procured his pardon. The most rigid censor could not but make great allowances for the faults into which so young a man had been seduced by evil example, by the luxuriance of a vigorous fancy, and by the inebriating effect of popular applause. The esteem, as well as the admiration, of the public was still within his reach. He might easily have effaced all memory of his transgressions, and have shared with Addison the glory of showing that the most brilliant wit may be the ally of virtue. But, in any case, prudence should have restrained him from encountering Collier. The non-juror was a man thoroughly fitted by nature, education, and habit, for polemical dispute. Congreve's mind, though a mind of no common fertility and vigour, was of a different class. No man understood so well the art of polishing epigrams and repartees into the clearest effulgence, and setting them neatly in easy and familiar dialogue. In this sort of jewellery he attained to a mastery unprecedented and inimitable. But he was altogether rude in the art of controversy; and he had a cause to defend which scarcely any art could have rendered victorious.

The event was such as might have been foreseen. Congreve's answer was a complete failure. He was angry, obscure, and dull. Even the Green Room and Will's Coffee-House were compelled to acknowledge that in wit, as well as in argument, the parson had a decided advantage over the poet. Not only was Congreve unable to make any show of a case where he was in the wrong; but he succeeded in putting himself completely in the wrong where he was in the right. Collier had taxed him with profaneness for calling a clergyman Mr. Prig, and for introducing a coachman named Jehu, in allusion to the King of Israel, who was known at a distance by his furious driving. Had there been nothing worse in *The Old Bachelor* and *Double Dealer*, Congreve might pass for as pure a writer as Cowper himself, who, in poems revised by so austere a censor as John Newton, calls a fox-hunting squire Nimrod, and gives to a chaplain the disrespectful name of Smug. Con-

greve might with good effect have appealed to the public whether it might not be fairly presumed that, when such frivolous charges were made, there were no very serious charges to make. Instead of doing this, he pretended that he meant no allusion to the Bible by the name of Jehu, and no reflection by the name of Prig. Strange, that a man of such parts should, in order to defend himself against imputations which nobody could regard as important, tell untruths which it was certain that nobody would believe!

One of the pleas which Congreve set up for himself and his brethren was that, though they might be guilty of a little levity here and there, they were careful to inculcate a moral, packed close into two or three lines, at the end of every play. Had the fact been as he stated it, the defence would be worth very little. For no man acquainted with human nature could think that a sententious couplet would undo all the mischief that five profligate acts had done. But it would have been wise in Congreve to have looked again at his own comedies before he used this argument. Collier did so; and found that the moral of *The Old Bachelor*, the grave apophthegm which is to be a set-off against all the libertinism of the piece, is contained in the following triplet:

> "What rugged ways attend the noon of life!
> Our sun declines, and with what anxious strife,
> What pain, we tug that galling load — a wife."

"*Love for Love*," says Collier, "may have a somewhat better farewell, but it would do a man little service should he remember it to his dying day:" —

> "The miracle to-day is, that we find
> A lover true, not that a woman's kind."

Collier's reply was severe and triumphant. One of his repartees we will quote, not as a favourable specimen of his manner, but because it was called forth by Congreve's characteristic affectation. The poet spoke of *The Old Bachelor* as a trifle to which

he attached no value, and which had become public by a sort of accident. "I wrote it," he said, "to amuse myself in a slow recovery from a fit of sickness." "What his disease was," replied Collier, "I am not to inquire: but it must be a very ill one to be worse than the remedy."

All that Congreve gained by coming forward on this occasion, was that he completely deprived himself of the excuse which he might with justice have pleaded for his early offences. "Why," asked Collier, "should the man laugh at the mischief of the boy, and make the disorders of his nonage his own, by an after approbation?"

Congreve was not Collier's only opponent. Vanbrugh, Dennis, and Settle took the field. And from a passage in a contemporary satire, we are inclined to think that among the answers to the *Short View* was one written, or supposed to be written, by Wycherley. The victory remained with Collier. A great and rapid reform in almost all the departments of our lighter literature was the effect of his labours. A new race of wits and poets arose, who generally treated with reverence the great ties which bind society together, and whose very indecencies were decent when compared with those of the school which flourished during the last forty years of the seventeenth century.

This controversy probably prevented Congreve from fulfilling the engagements into which he had entered with the actors. It was not until 1700 that he produced *The Way of the World*, the most deeply meditated and the most brilliantly written of all his works. It wants, perhaps, the constant movement, the effervescence of animal spirits, which we find in *Love for Love*. But the hysterical rants of Lady Wishfort, the meeting of Witwould and his brother, the country knight's courtship and his subsequent revel, and, above all, the chase and surrender of Millamant, are superior to anything that is to be found in the whole range of English comedy from the civil war downwards. It is quite inexplicable to us that this play should have failed on the stage. Yet so it was; and the author, already sore with the wounds which

Collier had inflicted, was galled past endurance by this new stroke. He resolved never again to expose himself to the rudeness of a tasteless audience, and took leave of the theatre forever.

He lived twenty-eight years longer, without adding to the high literary reputation which he had attained. He read much while he retained his eye-sight, and now and then wrote a short essay, or put an idle tale into verse; but he appears never to have planned any considerable work. The miscellaneous pieces which he published in 1710 are of little value, and have long been forgotten.

The stock of fame which he had acquired by his comedies was sufficient, assisted by the graces of his manner and conversation, to secure for him a high place in the estimation of the world. During the winter, he lived among the most distinguished and agreeable people in London. His summers were passed at the splendid country-seats of ministers and peers. Literary envy and political faction, which in that age respected nothing else, respected his repose. He professed to be one of the party of which his patron Montagu, now Lord Halifax, was the head. But he had civil words and small good offices for men of every shade of opinion. And men of every shade of opinion spoke well of him in return.

His means were for a long time scanty. The place which he had in possession barely enabled him to live with comfort. And, when the Tories came into power, some thought that he would lose even this moderate provision. But Harley, who was by no means disposed to adopt the exterminating policy of the October club, and who, with all his faults of understanding and temper, had a sincere kindness for men of genius, reassured the anxious poet by quoting very gracefully and happily the lines of Virgil,

> "*Non obtusa adeo gestamus pectora Pœni,*
> *Nec tam aversus equos Tyria Sol jungit ab urbe.*" [4]

[4] *We Carthaginians do not have such unfeeling breasts, nor does the sun so hostile to the Tyrian city harness his horses.* — VIRGIL, *Æneid*, I. 567–8.

The indulgence with which Congreve was treated by the Tories was not purchased by any concession on his part which could justly offend the Whigs. It was his rare good fortune to share the triumph of his friends without having shared their proscription. When the House of Hanover came to the throne, he partook largely of the prosperity of those with whom he was connected. The reversion to which he had been nominated twenty years before fell in. He was made secretary to the island of Jamaica; and his whole income amounted to twelve hundred a year, a fortune which, for a single man, was in that age not only easy but splendid. He continued, however, to practise the frugality which he had learned when he could scarce spare, as Swift tells us, a shilling to pay the chairman who carried him to Lord Halifax's. Though he had nobody to save for, he laid up at least as much as he spent.

The infirmities of age came early upon him. His habits had been intemperate; he suffered much from gout; and, when confined to his chamber, he had no longer the solace of literature. Blindness, the most cruel misfortune that can befall the lonely student, made his books useless to him. He was thrown on society for all his amusement; and in society his good breeding and vivacity made him always welcome.

By the rising men of letters he was considered not as a rival, but as a classic. He had left their arena; he never measured his strength with them; and he was always loud in applause of their exertions. They could, therefore, entertain no jealousy of him, and thought no more of detracting from his fame than of carping at the great men who had been lying a hundred years in Poets' Corner. Even the inmates of Grub Street, even the heroes of the Dunciad, were for once just to living merit. There can be no stronger illustration of the estimation in which Congreve was held than the fact that the English *Iliad*, a work which appeared with more splendid auspices than any other in our language, was dedicated to him. There was not a duke in the kingdom who would not have been proud of such a compliment. Dr. Johnson expresses great admiration for the independence of spirit which

Pope showed on this occasion. "He passed over peers and statesmen to inscribe his *Iliad* to Congreve, with a magnanimity of which the praise had been complete, had his friend's virtue been equal to his wit. Why he was chosen for so great an honour, it is not now possible to know." It is certainly impossible to know; yet we think it is possible to guess. The translation of the *Iliad* had been zealously befriended by men of all political opinions. The poet who, at an early age, had been raised to affluence by the emulous liberality of Whigs and Tories, could not with propriety inscribe to a chief of either party a work which had been munificently patronised by both. It was necessary to find some person who was at once eminent and neutral. It was therefore necessary to pass over peers and statesmen. Congreve had a high name in letters. He had a high name in aristocratic circles. He lived on terms of civility with men of all parties. By a courtesy paid to him, neither the ministers nor the leaders of the opposition could be offended.

The singular affectation which had from the first been characteristic of Congreve grew stronger and stronger as he advanced in life. At last it became disagreeable to him to hear his own comedies praised. Voltaire, whose soul was burnt up by the raging desire for literary renown, was half puzzled and half disgusted by what he saw, during his visit to England, of this extraordinary whim. Congreve disclaimed the character of a poet, declared that his plays were trifles produced in an idle hour, and begged that Voltaire would consider him merely as a gentleman. "If you had been merely a gentleman," said Voltaire, "I should not have come to see you."

Congreve was not a man of warm affections. Domestic ties he had none; and in the temporary connections which he formed with a succession of beauties from the green-room his heart does not appear to have been interested. Of all his attachments that to Mrs. Bracegirdle lasted the longest and was the most celebrated. This charming actress, who was, during many years, the idol of all London, whose face caused the fatal broil in which Mountfort fell,

and for which Lord Mohun was tried by the Peers, and to whom the Earl of Scarsdale was said to have made honourable addresses, had conducted herself, in very trying circumstances, with extraordinary discretion. Congreve at length became her confidential friend. They constantly rode out together and dined together. Some people said that she was his mistress, and others that she would soon be his wife. He was at last drawn away from her by the influence of a wealthier and haughtier beauty. Henrietta, daughter of the great Marlborough, and Countess of Godolphin, had, on her father's death, succeeded to his dukedom, and to the greater part of his immense property. Her husband was an insignificant man, of whom Lord Chesterfield said that he came to the House of Peers only to sleep, and that he might as well sleep on the right as on the left of the woolsack. Between the Duchess and Congreve sprang up a most eccentric friendship. He had a seat every day at her table, and assisted in the direction of her concerts. That malignant old beldame, the Dowager Duchess Sarah, who had quarrelled with her daughter as she had quarrelled with everybody else, affected to suspect that there was something wrong. But the world in general appears to have thought that a great lady might, without any imputation on her character, pay marked attention to a man of eminent genius who was near sixty years old, who was still older in appearance and in constitution, who was confined to his chair by gout, and who was unable to read from blindness.

In the summer of 1728, Congreve was ordered to try the Bath waters. During his excursion he was overturned in his chariot, and received some severe internal injury from which he never recovered. He came back to London in a dangerous state, complained constantly of a pain in his side and continued to sink, till in the following January he expired.

He left ten thousand pounds, saved out of the emoluments of his lucrative places. Johnson says that this money ought to have gone to the Congreve family, which was then in great distress. Doctor Young and Mr. Leigh Hunt, two gentlemen who seldom

agree with each other, but with whom, on this occasion, we are happy to agree, think that it ought to have gone to Mrs. Bracegirdle. Congreve bequeathed two hundred pounds to Mrs. Bracegirdle, and an equal sum to a certain Mrs. Jellat; but the bulk of his accumulations went to the Duchess of Marlborough, in whose immense wealth such a legacy was as a drop in the bucket. It might have raised the fallen fortunes of a Staffordshire squire; it might have enabled a retired actress to enjoy every comfort, and, in her sense, every luxury. But it was hardly sufficient to defray the Duchess's establishment for three months.

The great lady buried her friend with a pomp seldom seen at the funeral of poets. The corpse lay in state under the ancient roof of the Jerusalem Chamber, and was interred in Westminster Abbey. The pall was borne by the Duke of Bridgewater, Lord Cobham, the Earl of Wilmington, who had been Speaker, and was afterwards First Lord of the Treasury, and other men of high consideration. Her Grace laid out her friend's bequest in a superb diamond necklace, which she wore in honour of him, and, if report is to be believed, showed her regard in ways much more extraordinary. It is said that a statue of him in ivory, which moved by clockwork, was placed daily at her table, that she had a wax doll made in imitation of him, and that the feet of the doll were regularly blistered and anointed by the doctors, as poor Congreve's feet had been when he suffered from the gout. A monument was erected to the poet in Westminster Abbey, with an inscription written by the Duchess; and Lord Cobham honoured him with a cenotaph, which seems to us, though that is a bold word, the ugliest and most absurd of the buildings at Stowe.

We have said that Wycherley was a worse Congreve. There was, indeed, a remarkable analogy between the writings and lives of these two men. Both were gentlemen liberally educated. Both led town lives, and knew human nature only as it appears between Hyde Park and the Tower. Both were men of wit. Neither had much imagination. Both at an early age produced lively and profligate comedies. Both retired from the field while still in early

manhood, and owed to their youthful achievements in literature whatever consideration they enjoyed in later life. Both, after they had ceased to write for the stage, published volumes of miscellanies which did little credit either to their talents or to their morals. Both, during their declining years, hung loose upon society; and both, in their last moments, made eccentric and unjustifiable dispositions of their estates.

But in every point Congreve maintained his superiority to Wycherley. Wycherley had wit; but the wit of Congreve far outshines that of every comic writer, except Sheridan, who has arisen within the last two centuries. Congreve had not, in a large measure, the poetical faculty; but compared with Wycherley he might be called a great poet. Wycherley had some knowledge of books; but Congreve was a man of real learning. Congreve's offences against decorum, though highly culpable, were not so gross as those of Wycherley; nor did Congreve, like Wycherley, exhibit to the world the deplorable spectacle of a licentious dotage. Congreve died in the enjoyment of high consideration; Wycherley forgotten or despised. Congreve's will was absurd and capricious; but Wycherley's last actions appear to have been prompted by obdurate malignity.

Here, at least for the present, we must stop. Vanbrugh and Farquhar are not men to be hastily dismissed, and we have not left ourselves space to do them justice.

XXXIII.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

(1795–1881.)

1. *CRITICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS ESSAYS.*

Biography.[1]

[Written in 1832.]

Man's sociality of nature evinces itself, in spite of all that can be said, with abundant evidence by this one fact, were there no other: the unspeakable delight he takes in Biography. It is written, "The proper study of mankind is man"; to which study, let us candidly admit, he, by true or by false methods, applies himself, nothing loath. "Man is perennially interesting to man; nay, if we look strictly to it, there is nothing else interesting." How inexpressibly comfortable to know our fellow-creature; to see into him, understand his goings forth, decipher the whole heart of his mystery: nay, not only to see into him, but even to see out of him, to view the world altogether as he views it; so that we can theoretically construe him, and could almost practically personate him; and do now thoroughly discern both what manner of man he is, and what manner of thing he has got to work on and live on!

A scientific interest and a poetic one alike inspire us in this manner. A scientific: because every mortal has a Problem of Existence set before him, which, were it only, what for the most

[1] From Fraser's Magazine for April, 1832. First essay on *Boswell's Life of Johnson.*

it is, the Problem of keeping soul and body together, must be to a certain extent *original*, unlike every other; and yet, at the same time, so *like* every other; like our own, therefore: instructive, moreover, since we also are indentured to *live*. A poetic interest still more; for precisely this same struggle of human Free-will against material Necessity, which every man's Life, by the mere circumstance that the man continues alive, will more or less victoriously exhibit, — is that which above all else, or rather inclusive of all else, calls the Sympathy of mortal hearts into action; and whether as acted, or as represented and written of, not only is Poetry, but is the sole Poetry possible. Borne onwards by which two all-embracing interests, may the earnest Lover of Biography expand himself on all sides, and indefinitely enrich himself. Looking with the eyes of every new neighbour, he can discern a new world different from each: feeling with the heart of every neighbour, he lives with every neighbour's life, even as with his own. Of these millions of living men each individual is a mirror to us: a mirror both scientific and poetic; or, if you will, both natural and magical; — from which one would so gladly draw aside the gauze veil; and, peering therein, discern the image of his own natural face, and the supernatural secrets that prophetically lie under the same!

Observe, accordingly, to what extent, in the actual course of things, this business of biography is practised and relished. Define to thyself, judicious Reader, the real significance of these phenomena, named Gossip, Egotism, Personal Narrative, (miraculous or not,) Scandal, Raillery, Slander, and such like; the sum-total of which (with some fractional addition of a better ingredient, generally too small to be noticeable) constitutes that other grand phenomenon still called "Conversation." Do they not mean wholly: *Biography* and *Autobiography?* Not only in the common Speech of men; but in all Art, too, which is or should be the concentrated and conserved essence of what men can speak and show, Biography is almost the one thing needful.

Even in the highest works of Art our interest, as the critics

complain, is too apt to be strongly or even mainly of a Biographic sort. In the Art, we can nowise forget the Artist: while looking on the *Transfiguration*, while studying the *Iliad*, we ever strive to figure to ourselves what spirit dwelt in Raphael; what a head was that of Homer, wherein, woven of Elysian light and Tartarean gloom, that old world fashioned itself together, of which these written Greek characters are but a feeble though perennial copy. The Painter and the Singer are present to us; we partially and for the time become the very Painter and the very Singer, while we enjoy the Picture and the Song. Perhaps, too, let the critic say what he will, this is the highest enjoyment, the clearest recognition, we can have of these. Art indeed is Art; yet Man also is Man. Had the *Transfiguration* been painted without human hand, had it grown merely on the canvas, say by atmospheric influences, as lichen-pictures do on rocks, — it were a grand Picture doubtless; yet nothing like so grand as *the* Picture, which, on opening our eyes, we everywhere in Heaven and in Earth see painted; and everywhere pass over with indifference, — because the painter was not a Man. Think of this; much lies in it. The Vatican is great; yet poor to Chimborazo or the Peak of Teneriffe; its dome is but a foolish Big-endian or Little-endian chip of an egg-shell, compared with that star-fretted Dome where Arcturus and Orion glance forever; which latter, notwithstanding, who looks at, save perhaps some necessitous star-gazer bent to make Almanacs, some thick-quilted watchman, to see what weather it will prove? The Biographic interest is wanting: no Michael Angelo was He who built that "Temple of Immensity"; therefore do we, pitiful Littlenesses as we are, turn rather to wonder and to worship in the little toy-box of a Temple built by our like.

Still more decisively, still more exclusively does the Biographic interest manifest itself, as we descend into lower regions of spiritual communication; through the whole range of what is called Literature. Of History, for example, the most honoured, if not honourable species of composition, is not the whole purport biographic? "History," it has been said, "is the essence of

innumerable Biographies." Such, at least, it should be: whether it is, might admit of question. But, in any case, what hope have we in turning over these old interminable Chronicles, with their garrulities and insipidities; or still worse, in patiently examining those modern Narrations, of the Philosophic kind, where "Philosophy, teaching by Experience," has to sit like owl on housetop, *seeing* nothing, *understanding* nothing, uttering only, with solemnity enough, her perpetual most wearisome *hoo-hoo:* — what hope have we, except the for most part fallacious one of gaining some acquaintance with our fellow-creatures, though dead and vanished, yet dear to us; how they got along in those old days, suffering and doing; to what extent, and under what circumstances, they resisted the Devil and triumphed over him, or struck their colours to him, and were trodden under foot by him; how, in short, the perennial Battle went, which men name Life, which we also in these new days, with indifferent fortune, have to fight, and must bequeath to our sons and grandsons to go on fighting, — till the Enemy one day be quite vanished and abolished, or else the great Night sink and part the combatants; and thus, either by some Millennium or some new Noah's Deluge, the volume of Universal History wind itself up! Other hope, in studying such Books, we have none: and that it is a deceitful hope, who that has tried knows not? A feast of widest Biographic insight is spread for us; we enter full of hungry anticipation: alas! like so many other feasts, which life invites us to, a mere Ossian's "feast of *shells*," — the food and liquor being all emptied out and clean gone, and only the vacant dishes and deceitful emblems thereof left! Your modern Historical Restaurateurs are indeed little better than high-priests of Famine; that keep choicest china dinner-sets, only no dinner to serve therein. Yet such is our Biographical appetite, we run trying from shop to shop, with ever new hope; and, unless we could set the wind, with ever new disappointment.

Again, consider the whole class of Fictitious Narratives; from the highest category of epic or dramatic Poetry in Shakspeare and

Homer, down to the lowest of froth Prose in the Fashionable Novel. What are all these but so many mimic Biographies? Attempts, here by an inspired Speaker, there by an uninspired Babbler, to deliver himself, more or less ineffectually, of the grand secret wherewith all hearts labour oppressed: The significance of Man's Life; — which deliverance, even as traced in the unfurnished head, and printed at the Minerva Press, finds readers. For, observe, though there is *a* greatest Fool, as a superlative in every kind; and *the* most Foolish man in the Earth is now indubitably living and breathing, and did this morning or lately eat breakfast, and is even now digesting the same; and looks out on the world with his dim horn-eyes, and inwardly forms some unspeakable theory thereof: yet where shall the authentically Existing be personally met with! Can one of us, otherwise than by guess, know that we have got sight of him, have orally communed with him? To take even the narrower sphere of this our English Metropolis, can any one confidently say to himself, that he has conversed with the identical, individual Stupidest man now extant in London? No one. Deep as we dive in the Profound, there is ever a new depth opens: where the ultimate bottom may lie, through what new scenes of being we must pass before reaching it (except that we know it does lie somewhere, and might by human faculty and opportunity be reached), is altogether a mystery to us. Strange, tantalizing pursuit! We have the fullest assurance, not only that there is a Stupidest of London men actually resident, with bed and board of some kind, in London: but that several persons have been or perhaps are now speaking face to face with him: while for us, chase it as we may, such scientific blessedness will too probably be for ever denied! — But the thing we meant to enforce was this comfortable fact, that no known Head was so wooden, but there might be other heads to which it were a genius and Friar Bacon's Oracle. Of no given Book, not even of a Fashionable Novel, can you predicate with certainty that its vacuity is absolute; that there are not other vacuities which shall partially replenish themselves therefrom, and

esteem it a *plenum*. How knowest thou, may the distressed Novelwright exclaim, that I, here where I sit, am the Foolishest of existing mortals; that this my Long-ear of a Fictitious Biography shall not find one and the other, into whose still longer ears it may be the means, under Providence, of instilling somewhat? We answer, None knows, none can certainly know: therefore, write on, worthy Brother, even as thou canst, as it has been given thee.

Here, however, in regard to "Fictitious Biographies," and much other matter of like sort, which the greener mind in these days inditeth, we may as well insert some singular sentences on the importance and significance of *Reality*, as they stand written for us in Professor Gottfried Sauerteig's *Æsthetische Springwurzeln*:[2] a Work, perhaps, as yet new to most English readers. The Professor and Doctor is not a man whom we can praise without reservation; neither shall we say that his *Springwurzeln* (a sort of magical pick-locks, as he affectedly names them) are adequate to "*start*" every *bolt* that locks up an æsthetic mystery; nevertheless, in his crabbed, one-sided way, he sometimes hits masses of the truth. We endeavour to translate faithfully, and trust the reader will find it worth serious perusal:

"The significance, even for poetic purposes," says Sauerteig, "that lies in REALITY, is too apt to escape us; is perhaps only now beginning to be discerned. When we named *Rousseau's Confessions* an elegiaco-didactic Poem, we meant more than an empty figure of speech; we meant an historical scientific fact.

"Fiction, while the feigner of it knows that he is feigning, partakes, more than we suspect, of the nature of *lying;* and has ever an, in some degree, unsatisfactory character. All Mythologies were once Philosophies; were *believed:* the Epic Poems of old time, so long as they continued *epic*, and had any complete impressiveness, were Histories, and understood to be narratives of *facts*. In so far as Homer employed his gods as mere ornamental fringes, and had not himself, or at least did not expect his hearers to have, a belief that they were real agents in those antique

[2] *æsthetic primitive roots.*

doings; so far did he fail to be *genuine;* so far was he a partially *hollow* and false cringer; and sang to please only a portion of man's mind, not the whole thereof.

"Imagination is, after all, but a poor matter when it must part company with Understanding, and even front it hostilely in flat contradiction. Our mind is divided in twain: there is contest; wherein that which is weaker must needs come to the worse. Now of all feelings, states, principles, call it what you will, in man's mind, is not Belief the clearest, strongest; against which all others contend in vain? Belief is, indeed, the beginning and first condition of all spiritual Force whatsoever: only in so far as Imagination, were it but momentarily, is *believed*, can there be any use or meaning in it, any enjoyment of it. And what is momentary Belief? The enjoyment of a moment. Whereas a perennial Belief were enjoyment perennially, and with the whole united soul.

"It is thus that I judge of the Supernatural in an Epic Poem; and would say, the instant it had ceased to be authentically supernatural, and become what you call Machinery; sweep it out of sight (*schaff es mir vom Halse*[3])! Of a truth, that same 'Machinery,' about which the critics make such hubbub, was well named *Machinery;* for it is in very deed mechanical, nowise inspired or poetical. Neither for us is there the smallest æsthetic enjoyment in it; save only in this way: that we believe it *to have been believed*, — by the Singer or his Hearers; into whose case we now laboriously struggle to transport ourselves; and so, with stinted enough result, catch some reflex of the Reality, which for them was wholly real, and visible face to face. Whenever it has come so far that your 'Machinery' is avowedly mechanical and unbelieved, — what is it else, if we dare tell ourselves the truth, but a miserable meaningless Deception kept-up by old use and wont alone? If the gods of an *Iliad* are to us no longer authentic Shapes of Terror, heart-stirring, heart-appalling, but only vague glittering Shadows, — what must the dead Pagan gods of an *Epigoniad* be, the dead living Pagan-Christian gods of a *Lusiad*, the concrete-abstract, evangeli-

[3] *put it off my neck.*

cal-metaphysical gods of a *Paradise Lost?* Superannuated lumber! Cast raiment, at best; in which some poor mime, strutting and swaggering, may or may not set forth new noble Human Feelings (again a Reality), and so secure, or not secure, our pardon of such hoydenish making, — for which, in any case, he has a pardon to *ask*.

"True enough, none but the earliest Epic Poems can claim this distinction of entire credibility, of Reality: after an *Iliad*, a *Shaster*, a *Koran*, and other the like primitive performances, the rest seem, by this rule of mine, to be altogether excluded from the list. Accordingly, what *are* all the rest, from Virgil's *Æneid* downwards, in comparison? Frosty, artificial, heterogeneous things; more of gumflowers than of roses; at best, of the two mixed incoherently together: to some of which, indeed, it were hard to deny the title of Poems; yet to no one of which can that title belong in any sense even resembling the old high one it, in those old days, conveyed, — when the epithet 'divine' or 'sacred' as applied to the uttered Word of man, was not a vain metaphor, a vain sound, but a real name with meaning. Thus, too, the farther we recede from those early days, when Poetry, as true Poetry is always, was still sacred or divine, and inspired (what ours, in great part, only pretends to be), — the more impossible becomes it to produce any, we say not true Poetry, but tolerable semblance of such; the hollower, in particular, grow all manner of Epics; till at length, as in this generation, the very name of Epic sets men a-yawning, the announcement of a new Epic is received as a public calamity.

"But what if the *impossible* being once for all quite discarded, the *probable* be well adhered to; how stands it with fiction *then?* Why, then, I would say, the evil is much mended, but nowise completely cured. We have then, in place of the wholly dead modern Epic, the partially living modern Novel; to which latter it is much easier to lend that above-mentioned, so essential 'momentary credence,' than to the former: indeed infinitely easier: for the former being flatly incredible, no mortal *can* for a moment credit it, for a moment enjoy it. Thus, here and there, a *Tom Jones*,

a *Meister*, a *Crusoe*, will yield no little solacement to the minds of men: though still immeasurably less than a *Reality* would, were the significance thereof as impressively unfolded, were the genius that could so unfold it once given us by the kind Heavens. Neither say thou that proper Realities are wanting: for Man's Life, now as of old, is the genuine work of God; wherever there is a Man, a God also is revealed, and all that is God-like: a whole epitome of the Infinite, with its meanings, lies enfolded in the Life of every Man. Only, alas, that the Seer to discern this same God-like, and with fit utterance *un*fold it for us, is wanting, and may long be wanting!

"Nay, a question arises on us here, wherein the whole German reading-world will eagerly join: Whether man *can* any longer be so interested in the spoken Word, as he often was in those provincial days, when, rapt away by its inscrutable power, he pronounced it, in such dialect as he had, to be *transcendental*, (to *transcend* all measure,) to be sacred, prophetic, and the inspiration of a God? For myself, I (*ich meines Ortes*,)[4] by faith or by insight, do heartily understand that the answer to such question will be, Yea! For never, that I could in searching find out, has Man been, by Time which devours so much, deprivated of any faculty whatsoever that he in any era was possessed of. To my seeming, the babe born yesterday has all the organs of Body, Soul, and Spirit, and in exactly the same combination and entireness, that the oldest Pelasgic Greek, or Mesopotamian Patriarch, or Father Adam himself could boast of. Ten fingers, one heart with venous and arterial blood therein, still belong to man that is born of woman: when did he lose any of his spiritual Endowments either: above all, his highest spiritual Endowment, that of revealing Poetic Beauty, and of adequately receiving the same? Not the material, not the susceptibility is wanting; only the Poet, or long series of Poets, to work on these. True, alas too true, the Poet *is* still utterly wanting, or all but utterly: nevertheless have we not centuries enough before us to produce him in? Him and

[4] *as for me*, lit., *I in my place.*

much else! — I, for the present, will but predict that chiefly by working more and more on REALITY, and evolving more and more wisely *its* inexhaustible meanings; and, in brief, speaking forth in fit utterance whatsoever our whole soul *believes*, and ceasing to speak forth what things soever our whole soul does not believe, — will this high emprise be accomplished, or approximated to."

These notable, and not unfounded, though partial and *deep*-seeing rather than *wide*-seeing observations on the great import of REALITY, considered even as a poetic material, we have inserted the more willingly because a transient feeling to the same purpose may often have suggested itself to many readers; and on the whole, it is good that every reader and every writer understand, with all intensity of conviction, what quite infinite worth lies in *Truth;* how all-pervading, omnipotent, in man's mind, is the thing we name *Belief*. For the rest, Herr Sauerteig, though one-sided, on this matter of Reality, seems heartily persuaded, and is not perhaps so ignorant as he looks. It cannot be unknown to him, for example, what noise is made about "Invention"; what a supreme rank this faculty is reckoned to hold in the poetic endowment. Great truly is Invention; nevertheless, that is but a poor exercise of it with which Belief is not concerned. "An Irishman with whiskey in his head," as poor Byron said, will invent you, in this kind, till there is enough, and to spare. Nay, perhaps, if we consider well, the highest exercise of Invention has, in very deed, nothing to do with Fiction; but is an invention of new Truth, what we can call a Revelation; which last does undoubtedly transcend all other poetic efforts, nor can Herr Sauerteig be too loud in its praises. But, on the other hand, whether such effort is still possible for man, Herr Sauerteig and the bulk of the world are probably at issue, — and will probably continue so till that same "Revelation," or new "Invention of Reality," of the sort he desiderates, shall itself make its appearance.

Meanwhile, quitting these airy regions, let any one bethink him how impressive the smallest historical *fact* may become, as contrasted with the grandest *fictitious event;* what an incalculable force

lies for us in this consideration: The Thing which I here hold imaged in my mind did actually occur; was, in very truth, an element in the system of the All, whereof I too form part; had therefore, and has, through all time, an authentic being; is not a dream, but a reality! We ourselves can remember reading, in *Lord Clarendon*,[5] with feelings perhaps somehow accidentally opened to it, — certainly with a depth of impression strange to us then and now, — that insignificant-looking passage, where Charles, after the battle of Worcester, glides down, with Squire Careless, from the Royal Oak, at night-fall, being hungry: how "making a shift to get over hedges and ditches, after walking at least eight or nine miles, which were the most grievous to the King by the weight of his boots (for he could not put *them* off, when he cut off his hair, for want of shoes), before morning they came to *a poor cottage, the owner whereof, being a Roman Catholic, was known to Careless*." How this poor drudge, being knocked up from his snoring, "carried them into a little barn full of hay, which was a better lodging than he had for himself"; and by and by, not without difficulty, brought his Majesty "a piece of bread and a great pot of butter-milk," saying candidly that "he himself lived by his daily labour, and that what he had brought him was the fare he and his wife had": on which nourishing diet his Majesty, "staying upon the haymow," feeds thankfully for two days; and then departs, under new guidance, having first changed clothes down to the very shirt and "old pair of shoes," with his landlord; and so as worthy Bunyan has it, "goes on his way, and sees him no more." Singular enough if we will think of it! This then was a genuine flesh-and-blood Rustic of the year 1651: he did actually swallow bread and butter-milk (not having ale and bacon), and do field-labour; with these hob-nailed "shoes" has sprawled through mud-roads in winter, and, jocund or not, driven his team a-field in summer; he made bargains; had chafferings and higglings, now a sore heart, now a glad one; was born; was a son, was a father; — toiled in many ways, being forced to it, till the strength was all

[5] *History of the Rebellion*, III. 625.

worn out of him: and then lay down "to rest his galled back," and sleep there till the long-distant morning! — How comes it, that he alone of all the British rustics who tilled and lived with him, on whom the blessed sun on that same "fifth day of September" was shining, should have chanced to rise on us; that this poor pair of clouted Shoes, out of the million million hides that have been tanned, and cut, and worn, should still subsist, and hang visibly together? We see him but for a moment; for one moment, the blanket of the Night is rent asunder, so that we behold and see, and then closes over him for ever.

So, too, in some *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, how indelible, and magically bright does many a little *Reality* dwell in our remembrance! There is no need that the personages on the scene be a King and Clown; that the scene be the Forest of the Royal Oak, "on the borders of Staffordshire": need only that the scene lie on this old firm Earth of ours, where we also have so surprisingly arrived; that the personages be *men*, and *seen* with the eyes of a man. Foolish enough, how some slight, perhaps mean and even ugly incident — if *real*, and well presented, will fix itself in a susceptive memory, and lie ennobled there; silvered over with the pale cast of thought, with the pathos which belongs only to the Dead. For the Past is all holy to us; the Dead are all holy, even they that were base and wicked while alive. Their baseness and wickedness was not *They*, was but the heavy unmanageable Environment that lay round them, with which they fought unprevailing: *they* (the ethereal God-given Force that dwelt in them, and was their *Self*) have now shuffled off that heavy Environment, and are free and pure: their life-long Battle, go how it might, is all ended, with many wounds or with fewer; they have been recalled from it, and the once harsh-jawing battle-field has become a silent awe-inspiring Golgotha, and *Gottesacker* (Field of God)! — Boswell relates this in itself smallest and poorest of occurrences: "As we walked along the Strand to-night, arm in arm, a woman of the town accosted us in the usual enticing manner. 'No, no, my girl,' said Johnson; 'it won't do.' He, however, did not treat her with harsh-

ness, and we talked of the wretched life of such women." Strange power of *Reality!* Not even this poorest of occurrences, but now, after seventy years are come and gone, has a meaning for us. Do but consider that it is *true;* that it did in very deed occur! That unhappy Outcast, with all her sins and woes, her lawless desires, too complex mischances, her wailings and her riotings, has departed utterly: alas! her siren finery has got all besmutched; ground, generations since, into dust and smoke; of her degraded body, and whole miserable earthly existence, all is away! she is no longer here, but far from us, in the bosom of Eternity, — whence we too came, whither we too are bound! Johnson said, "No, no, my girl; it won't do"; and then "we talked"; — and herewith the wretched one, seen but for the twinkling of an eye, passes on into the utter Darkness. No high Calista,[6] that ever issued from Story-teller's brain, will impress us more deeply than this meanest of the mean; and for a good reason: That *she* issued from the Maker of Men.

It is well worth the Artist's while to examine for himself what it is that gives such pitiful incidents their memorableness; his aim likewise is, above all things, to be *memorable.* Half the effect, we already perceive, depends on the object, on its being *real,* on its being really *seen.* The other half will depend on the observer; and the question now is: "How are real objects to be *so* seen; on what quality of observing, or of style in describing, does this so intense pictorial power depend?" Often a slight circumstance contributes curiously to the result: some little, and perhaps to appearance accidental, feature is presented; a light gleam, which instantaneously *excites* the mind, and urges it to complete the picture, and evolve the meaning thereof for itself. By critics, such light gleams and their almost magical influence have frequently been noted: but the power to produce such, to select such features as will produce them, is generally treated as a knack, or trick of the trade, a secret for being "graphic"; whereas these magical feats are, in truth, rather inspirations; and the gift of performing them,

[6] "A celebrated character in Rowe's *Fair Penitent.*" — WHEELER.

which acts unconsciously, without forethought, and as if by nature alone, is properly a *genius* for description.

One grand, invaluable secret there is, however, which includes all the rest, and, what is comfortable, lies clearly in every man's power: *To have an open, loving heart, and what follows from the possession of such!* Truly it has been said, emphatically in these days ought it to be repeated: A loving Heart is the beginning of all Knowledge. This it is that opens the whole mind, quickens every faculty of the intellect to do its fit work, that of *knowing;* and therefrom, by sure consequence, of *vividly uttering forth.* Other secret for being "*graphic*" is there none, worth having: but this is an all-sufficient one. See, for example, what a small Boswell can do! Hereby, indeed, is the whole man made a living mirror, wherein the wonders of this ever-wonderful Universe are, in their true light (which is ever a magical, miraculous one) represented, and reflected back on us. It has been said, "the heart sees farther than the head": but, indeed, without the seeing heart there is no true seeing for the head so much as possible; all is mere *oversight*, hallucination and vain superficial phantasmagoria, which can permanently profit no one.

Here, too, may we not pause for an instant, and make a practical reflection? Considering the multitude of mortals that handle the Pen in these days, and can mostly spell, and write without glaring violations of grammar, the question naturally arises: How is it, then, that no Work proceeds from them, bearing any stamp of authenticity and permanence; of worth for more than one day? Ship-loads of Fashionable Novels, Sentimental Rhymes, Tragedies, Farces, Diaries of Travel, Tales by flood and field, are swallowed monthly into the bottomless Pool; still does the Press toil: innumerable Paper-makers, Compositors, Printers' Devils, Bookbinders, and Hawkers grown hoarse with loud proclaiming, rest not from their labour; and still, in torrents, rushes on the great array of Publications, unpausing, to their final home; and still Oblivion, like the Grave, cries: Give! Give! How is it that of all these countless multitudes, no one can attain to the smallest mark

of excellence, or produce aught that shall endure longer than "snow-flake on the river," or the foam of penny-beer? We answer: Because they *are* foam; because there is no *Reality* in them. These Three Thousand men, women, and Children, that make up the army of British Authors, do not, if we will well consider it, *see* anything whatever; consequently *have* nothing that they can record and utter, only more or fewer things that they can plausibly pretend to record. The Universe, of Man and Nature, is still quite shut-up from them; the "open secret" still utterly a secret; because no sympathy with Man or Nature, no love and free simplicity of heart has yet unfolded the same. Nothing but a pitiful Image of their own pitiful Self, with its vanities, and grudgings, and ravenous hunger of all kinds, hangs forever painted in the retina of these unfortunate persons: so that the starry ALL, with whatsoever it embraces, does but appear as some expanded magic-lantern shadow of that same Image, — and naturally looks pitiful enough.

It is vain for these persons to allege that they are naturally without gift, naturally stupid and sightless, and so *can* attain to no knowledge of anything; therefore, in writing of anything, must needs write falsehoods of it, there being in it no truth for them. Not so, good Friends. The stupidest of you has a certain faculty; were it but that of articulate speech (say in the Scottish, the Irish, the Cockney dialect, or even in "Governess-English"), and of physically discerning what lies under your nose. The stupidest of you would perhaps grudge to be compared in faculty with James Boswell; yet see what he has produced! You do not use your faculty honestly; your heart is shut up; full of greediness, malice, discontent; so your intellectual sense cannot be open. It is vain also to urge that James Boswell had opportunities; saw great men and great things, such as you can never hope to look on. What make ye of Parson White in Selborne? He had not only no great men to look on, but not even men; merely sparrows and cock-chafers: yet has he left us a *Biography* of these; which, under its title *Natural History of Selborne*, still

remains valuable to us; which has copied a little sentence or two *faithfully* from the inspired volume of Nature, and so is itself not without inspiration. Go ye and do likewise. Sweep away utterly all frothiness and falsehood from your heart; struggle unweariedly to acquire, what is possible for every God-created Man, a free, open, humble soul: *speak not at all, in any wise, till you have somewhat to speak;* care not for the *reward* of your speaking, but simply and with undivided mind for the *truth* of your speaking: then be placed in what section of Space and of Time soever, do but open your eyes, and they shall actually *see*, and bring you real *knowledge*, wondrous, worthy of *belief;* and instead of one Boswell and one White, the world will rejoice in a thousand, — stationed on their thousand several watch-towers, to instruct us by indubitable documents, of whatsoever in our so stupendous World comes to light and *is!* O, had the Editor of this Magazine but a magic rod to turn all that not inconsiderable Intellect, which now deluges us with artificial soap-lather, and mere Lying, into the faithful study of Reality, — what knowledge of great, everlasting Nature, of Man's ways and doings therein, would not every year bring us in! Can we but change one single soap-latherer and mountebank Juggler into a true Thinker and Doer, who even *tries* honestly to think and do — great will be our reward.

But to return; or rather from this point to begin our journey! If now, what with Herr Sauerteig's *Springwurzeln*, what with so much lucubration of our own, it have become apparent how deep, immeasurable is the "worth that lies in *Reality*," and farther, how exclusive the interest which man takes in the Histories of Man, — may it not seem lamentable, that so few genuinely good *Biographies* have yet been accumulated in Literature; that in the whole world, one cannot find, going strictly to work, above some dozen or baker's dozen, and those chiefly of very ancient date? Lamentable; yet after what we have just seen, accountable. Another question might be asked: How comes it that in England we have simply one good Biography, this *Boswell's Johnson;* and of good, indifferent, or even bad attempts at Biography, fewer

than any civilized people? Consider the French and Germans, with their Moreris, Bayles, Jördenses, Jöchers, their innumerable *Memoires*, and *Schilderungen*, and *Biographies Universelles;* not to speak of Rousseaus, Goethes, Schubarts, Jung-Stillings: and then contrast with these our poor Birches and Kippises and Pecks, — the whole breed of whom, moreover, is now extinct!

With this question, as the answer might lead us far, and come out unflattering to patriotic sentiment, we shall not intermeddle; but turn rather, with great pleasure, to the fact, that one excellent Biography *is* actually English; and even now lies, in Five new Volumes, at our hand, soliciting a new consideration from us; such as, age after age (the Perennial showing ever new phases as *our* position alters), it may long be profitable to bestow on it; — to which task we here, in this age, gladly address ourselves.

First, however, let the foolish April-fool Day pass by; and our Reader, during these twenty-nine days of uncertain weather that will follow, keep pondering, according to convenience, the purport of BIOGRAPHY in general: then, with the blessed dew of May-day, and in unlimited convenience of space, shall all that we have written on *Johnson*, and *Boswell's Johnson*, and *Croker's Boswell's Johnson*, be faithfully laid before him.

XXXIII.

2. *HERO-WORSHIP.*

[Written in 1840.]

The Hero as Poet . . . Shakspeare.

As Dante, the Italian man, was sent into our world to embody musically the Religion of the Middle Ages, the Religion of our Modern Europe, its Inner Life; so Shakspeare, we may say, embodies for us the Outer Life of our Europe as developed then, its chivalries, courtesies, humours, ambitions, what practical way of thinking, acting, looking, at the world, man then had. As in Homer we may still construe Old Greece; so in Shakspeare and Dante, after thousands of years, what our modern Europe was, in Faith and in Practice, will still be legible. Dante has given us the Faith or soul; Shakspeare, in a not less noble way, has given us the Practice or body. This latter also we were to have: a man was sent for it, the man Shakspeare. Just when that chivalry way of life had reached its last finish, and was on the point of breaking down into slow or swift dissolution, as we now see it everywhere, this other sovereign Poet, with his seeing eye, with his perennial singing voice, was sent to take note of it, to give long-enduring record of it. Two fit men: Dante, deep, fierce as the central fire of the world; Shakspeare, wide, placid, far-seeing, as the Sun, the upper light of the world. Italy produced the one world-voice; we English had the honour of producing the other.

Curious enough how, as it were by mere accident, this man came to us. I think always, so great, quiet, complete and self-sufficing is this Shakspeare, had the Warwickshire Squire not prosecuted him for deer-stealing, we had perhaps never heard of him as

a Poet! The woods and skies, the rustic Life of Man in Stratford there, had been enough for this man! But indeed that strange outbudding of our whole English Existence, which we call the Elizabethan Era, did not it too come as of its own accord? The 'Tree Igdrasil'[7] buds and withers by its own laws, — too deep for our scanning. Yet it does bud and wither, and every bough and leaf of it is there, by fixed eternal laws; not a Sir Thomas Lucy but comes at the hour fit for him. Curious, I say, and not sufficiently considered: how everything does coöperate with all; not a leaf rotting on the highway but is indissoluble portion of solar and stellar systems; no thought, word or act of man but has sprung withal out of all men, and works sooner or later, recognisably or irrecognisably, on all men! It is all a Tree: circulation of sap and influences, mutual communication of every minutest leaf with the lowest talon of a root, with every other greatest and minutest portion of the whole. The Tree Igdrasil, that has its roots down in the Kingdoms of Hela and Death, and whose boughs overspread the highest Heaven! —

In some sense it may be said that this glorious Elizabethan Era with its Shakspeare, as the outcome and flowerage of all which had preceded it, is itself attributable to the Catholicism of the Middle Ages. The Christian Faith, which was the theme of Dante's Song, had produced this Practical Life which Shakspeare was to sing. For Religion then, as it now and always is, was the soul of Practice; the primary vital fact in men's life. And remark here, as rather curious, that Middle-Age Catholicism was abolished, so far as Acts of Parliament could abolish it, before Shakspeare, the noblest product of it, made his appearance. He did make his appearance nevertheless. Nature at her own time, with Catholicism or what else might be necessary, sent him forth; taking small thought of Acts of Parliament. King-Henrys, Queen-Eliza-

[7] In the Norse mythology of the *Edda*, Yggdrasil is "the ash of destiny, biggest and best of all trees, under whose widespread boughs the gods hold their doom each day." — METCALFE, *The Englishman and the Scandinavian*, p. 242.

beths go their way; and Nature too goes hers. Acts of Parliament, on the whole, are small, notwithstanding the noise they make. What Act of Parliament, debate at St. Stephen's, on the hustings or elsewhere, was it that brought this Shakspeare into being? No dining at Freemasons' Tavern, opening subscription-lists, selling of shares, and infinite other jangling and true or false endeavouring! This Elizabethan Era, and all its nobleness and blessedness, came without proclamation, preparation of ours. Priceless Shakspeare was the free gift of Nature; given altogether silently; — received altogether silently, as if it had been a thing of little account. And yet, very literally, it is a priceless thing. One should look at that side of matters too.

Of this Shakspeare of ours, perhaps the opinion one sometimes hears a little idolatrously expressed is, in fact, the right one; I think the best judgment not of this country only, but of Europe at large, is slowly pointing to the conclusion, That Shakspeare is the chief of all Poets hitherto; the greatest intellect who, in our recorded world, has left record of himself in the way of Literature. On the whole, I know not such a power of vision, such a faculty of thought, if we take all the characters of it, in any other man. Such a calmness of depth; placid joyous strength; all things imaged in that great soul of his so true and clear, as in a tranquil unfathomable sea! It has been said that in the constructing of Shakspeare's Dramas there is, apart from all other 'faculties' as they are called, an understanding manifested, equal to that in Bacon's *Novum Organum*. That is true; and it is not a truth that strikes every one. It would become more apparent if we tried, any of us for himself, how, out of Shakspeare's dramatic materials, *we* could fashion such a result! The built house seems all so fit, — every-way as it should be, as if it came there by its own law and the nature of things, — we forget the rude disorderly quarry it was shaped from. The very perfection of the house, as if Nature herself had made it, hides the builder's merit. Perfect, more perfect than any other man, we may call Shakspeare in this: he discerns, knows as by instinct, what condition he works under, what his

materials are, what his own force and its relation to them is. It is not a transitory glance of insight that will suffice; it is deliberate illumination of the whole matter; it is a calmly *seeing* eye; a great intellect, in short. How a man, of some wide thing that he has witnessed, will construct a narrative, what kind of picture and delineation he will give of it, — is the best measure you could get of what intellect is in the man. Which circumstance is vital and shall stand prominent; which unessential, fit to be suppressed; where is the true *beginning*, the true sequence and ending? To find out this you task the whole force of insight that is in the man. He must *understand* the thing; according to the depth of his understanding, will the fitness of his answer be. You will try him so. Does like join itself to like; does the spirit of method stir in that confusion, so that its embroilment becomes order? Can the man say, *Fiat lux*, Let there be light; and out of chaos make a world? Precisely as there is *light* in himself, will he accomplish this.

Or indeed we may say again, it is in what I called Portrait-painting, delineating of men and things, especially of men, that Shakspeare is great. All the greatness of the man comes out decisively here. It is unexampled, I think, that calm creative perspicacity of Shakspeare. The thing he looks at reveals not this or that face of it, but its inmost heart, and generic secret: it dissolves itself as in light before him, so that he discerns the perfect structure of it. Creative, we said: poetic creation, what is this too but *seeing* the thing sufficiently? The *word* that will describe the thing, follows of itself from such clear intense sight of the thing. And is not Shakspeare's *morality*, his valour, candour, tolerance, truthfulness; his whole victorious strength and greatness, which can triumph over such obstructions, visible there too? Great as the world! No *twisted*, poor convex-concave mirror, reflecting all objects with its own convexities and concavities; a perfectly *level* mirror; — that is to say withal, if we will understand it, a man justly related to all things and men, a good man. It is truly a lordly spectacle how this great soul takes

in all kinds of men and objects, a Falstaff, an Othello, a Juliet, a Coriolanus; sets them all forth to us in their round completeness; loving, just, the equal brother of all. *Novum Organum*, and all the intellect you will find in Bacon, is of a quite secondary order; earthly, material, poor in comparison with this. Among modern men, one finds, in strictness, almost nothing of the same rank. Goethe alone, since the days of Shakspeare, reminds me of it. Of him too you say that he *saw* the object: you may say what he himself says of Shakspeare: 'His characters are like watches with dial-plates of transparent crystal: they show you the hour like others, and the inward mechanism also is all visible.'

The seeing eye! It is this that discloses the inner harmony of things; what Nature meant, what musical idea Nature has wrapped-up in these often rough embodiments. Something she did mean. To the seeing eye that something were discernible. Are they base, miserable things? You can laugh over them, you can weep over them; you can in some way or other genially relate yourself to them?—you can, at lowest, hold your peace about them, turn away your own and others' face from them, till the hour come for practically exterminating and extinguishing them! At bottom, it is the Poet's first gift, as it is all men's, that he have intellect enough. He will be a Poet if he have: a Poet in word; or failing that, perhaps still better, a Poet in act. Whether he write at all; and if so, whether in prose or in verse, will depend on accidents: who knows on what extremely trivial accidents,—perhaps on his having had a singing-master, on his being taught to sing in his boyhood! But the faculty which enables him to discern the inner heart of things, and the harmony that dwells there (for whatsoever exists has a harmony in the heart of it, or it would not hold together and exist), is not the result of habits or accidents, but the gift of Nature herself; the primary outfit for a Heroic Man in what sort soever. To the Poet, as to every other, we say first of all, *See*. If you cannot do that, it is of no use to keep stringing rhymes together, jingling sensibilities against each other, and *name* yourself a Poet; there is no hope

for you. If you can, there is, in prose or verse, in action or speculation, all manner of hope. The crabbed old Schoolmaster used to ask, when they brought him a new pupil, "But are ye sure he's *not a dunce?*" Why, really one might ask the same thing, in regard to every man proposed for whatsoever function; and consider it as the one enquiry needful: Are ye sure he's not a dunce? There is, in this world, no other entirely fatal person.

For, in fact, I say the degree of vision that dwells in a man is a correct measure of the man. If called to define Shakspeare's faculty, I should say superiority of Intellect, and think I had included all under that. What indeed are faculties? We talk of faculties as if they were distinct, things separable; as if a man had intellect, imagination, fancy, &c., as he has hands, feet and arms. That is a capital error. Then again, we hear of a man's 'intellectual nature,' and of his 'moral nature,' as if these again were divisible, and existed apart. Necessities of language do perhaps prescribe such forms of utterance; we must speak, I am aware, in that way, if we are to speak at all. But words ought not to harden into things for us. It seems to me, our apprehension of this matter is, for most part, radically falsified thereby. We ought to know withal, and to keep for ever in mind, that these divisions are at bottom but *names;* that man's spiritual nature, the vital Force which dwells in him, is essentially one and indivisible; that what we call imagination, fancy, understanding, and so forth, are but different figures of the same Power of Insight, all indissolubly connected with each other, physiognomically related; that if we knew one of them, we might know all of them. Morality itself, what we call the moral quality of a man, what is this but another *side* of the one vital Force whereby he is and works? All that a man does is physiognomical of him. You may see how a man would fight, by the way in which he sings; his courage, or want of courage, is visible in the word he utters, in the opinion he has formed, no less than in the stroke he strikes. He is *one;* and preaches the same Self abroad in all these ways.

Without hands a man might have feet, and could still walk:

but, consider it, — without morality, intellect were impossible for him; a thoroughly immoral *man* could not know anything at all! To know a thing, what we can call knowing, a man must first *love* the thing, sympathize with it: that is, be *virtuously* related to it. If he have not the justice to put down his own selfishness at every turn, the courage to stand by the dangerous-true at every turn, how shall he know? His virtues, all of them, will lie recorded in his knowledge. Nature, with her truth, remains to the bad, to the selfish and the pusillanimous for ever a sealed book: what such can know of Nature is mean, superficial, small; for the uses of the day merely. — But does not the very Fox know something of Nature? Exactly so: it knows where the geese lodge! The human Reynard, very frequent everywhere in the world; what more does he know but this and the like of this? Nay, it should be considered too, that if the Fox had not a certain vulpine *morality*, he could not even know where the geese were, or get at the geese! If he spent his time in splenetic atrabiliar reflections on his own misery, his ill usage by Nature, Fortune and other Foxes, and so forth; and had not courage, promptitude, practicality, and other suitable vulpine gifts and graces, he would catch no geese. We may say of the Fox too that his morality and insight are of the same dimensions; different faces of the same internal unity of vulpine life! — These things are worth stating; for the contrary of them acts with manifold very baleful perversion, in this time: what limitations, modifications they require, your own candour will supply.

If I say, therefore, that Shakspeare is the greatest of Intellects, I have said all concerning him. But there is more in Shakspeare's intellect than we have yet seen. It is what I call an unconscious intellect; there is more virtue in it than he himself is aware of. Novalis beautifully remarks of him, that those dramas of his are Products of Nature too, deep as Nature herself. I find a great truth in this saying. Shakspeare's Art is not Artifice; the noblest worth of it is not there by plan or precontrivance. It grows-up from the deeps of Nature, through this noble sincere soul, who is

a voice of Nature. The latest generations of men will find new meanings in Shakspeare, new elucidations of their own human being; 'new harmonies with the infinite structure of the Universe: concurrences with later ideas, affinities with the higher powers and senses of man.' This well deserves meditating. It is Nature's highest reward to a true simple great soul, that he get thus to be *a part of herself*. Such a man's works, whatsoever he with utmost conscious exertion and forethought shall accomplish, grow up withal *un*consciously, from the unknown deeps in him; — as the oak-tree grows from the Earth's bosom, as the mountains and waters shape themselves; with a symmetry grounded on Nature's own laws, conformable to all Truth whatsoever. How much in Shakspeare lies hid; his sorrows, his silent struggles known to himself; much that was not known at all, not speakable at all: like *roots*, like sap and forces working underground! Speech is great; but Silence is greater.

Withal the joyful tranquillity of this man is notable. I will not blame Dante for his misery: it is as battle without victory; but true battle, — the first, indispensable thing. Yet I call Shakspeare greater than Dante, in that he fought truly, and did conquer. Doubt it not, he had his own sorrows: those *Sonnets* of his will even testify expressly in what deep waters he had waded, and swum struggling for his life; — as what man like him ever failed to have to do? It seems to me a heedless notion, our common one, that he sat like a bird on the bough; and sang forth, free and offhand, never knowing the troubles of other men. Not so; with no man is it so. How could a man travel forward from rustic deer-poaching to such tragedy-writing, and not fall in with sorrows by the way? Or, still better, how could a man delineate a Hamlet, a Coriolanus, a Macbeth, so many suffering heroic hearts, if his own heroic heart had never suffered? — And now, in contrast with all this, observe his mirthfulness, his genuine overflowing love of laughter! You would say, in no point does he *exaggerate* but only in laughter. Fiery objurgations, words that pierce and burn, are to be found in Shakspeare; yet he is always in measure here;

never what Johnson would remark as a specially 'good hater.' But his laughter seems to pour from him in floods; he heaps all manner of ridiculous nicknames on the butt he is bantering, tumbles and tosses him in all sorts of horse-play; you would say, with his whole heart laughs. And then, if not always the finest, it is always a genial laughter. Not at mere weakness, at misery or poverty; never. No man who *can* laugh, what we call laughing, will laugh at these things. It is some poor character only *desiring* to laugh, and have the credit of wit, that does so. Laughter means sympathy; good laughter is not 'the crackling of thorns under the pot.' Even at stupidity and pretension this Shakspeare does not laugh otherwise than genially. Dogberry and Verges tickle our very hearts; and we dismiss them covered with explosions of laughter: but we like the poor fellows only the better for our laughing; and hope they will get on well there, and continue Presidents of the City-watch. Such laughter, like sunshine on the deep sea, is very beautiful to me.

We have no room to speak of Shakspeare's individual works; though perhaps there is much still waiting to be said on that head. Had we, for instance, all his plays reviewed as *Hamlet* in *Wilhelm Meister*, is! A thing which might, one day, be done. August Wilhelm Schlegel has a remark on his Historical Plays, *Henry Fifth* and the others, which is worth remembering. He calls them a kind of National Epic. Marlborough, you recollect, said, he knew no English History but what he had learned from Shakspeare. There are really, if we look to it, few as memorable Histories. The great salient points are admirably seized; all rounds itself off, into a kind of rhythmic coherence; it is, as Schlegel says, *epic;* — as indeed all delineation by a great thinker will be. There are right beautiful things in those Pieces, which indeed together form one beautiful thing. That battle of Agincourt strikes me as one of the most perfect things, in its sort, we anywhere have of Shakspeare's. The description of the two hosts: the worn-out, jaded English; the dread hour, big with destiny, when the battle shall begin; and then that deathless valour: "Ye

good yeomen, whose limbs were made in England!" There is a noble Patriotism in it, — far other than the 'indifference' you sometimes hear ascribed to Shakspeare. A true English heart breathes, calm and strong, through the whole business; not boisterous, protrusive; all the better for that. There is a sound in it like the ring of steel. This man too had a right stroke in him, had it come to that!

But I will say, of Shakspeare's works generally, that we have no full impress of him there; even as full as we have of many men. His works are so many windows, through which we see a glimpse of the world that was in him. All his works seem, comparatively speaking, cursory, imperfect, written under cramping circumstances, giving only here and there a note of the full utterance of the man. Passages there are that come upon you like splendour out of Heaven; bursts of radiance, illuminating the very heart of the thing: you say, "That is *true*, spoken once and forever; wheresoever and whensoever there is an open human soul, that will be recognised as true!" Such bursts, however, make us feel that the surrounding matter is not radiant; that it is, in part, temporary, conventional. Alas, Shakspeare had to write for the Globe Playhouse: his great soul had to crush itself, as it could, into that and no other mould. It was with him, then, as it is with us all. No man works save under conditions. The sculptor cannot set his own free Thought before us; but his Thought as he could translate it into the stone that was given, with the tools that were given. *Disjecta membra*[8] are all that we find of any Poet, or of any man.

Whoever looks intelligently at this Shakspeare may recognise that he too was a *Prophet*, in his way; of an insight analogous to the Prophetic, though he took it up in another strain. Nature seemed to this man also divine; *un*speakable, deep as Tophet, high as Heaven: 'We are such stuff as Dreams are made of!' That scroll in Westminster Abbey, which few read with under-

[8] *scattered limbs.*

standing, is of the depth of any seer. But the man sang; did not preach, except musically. We call Dante the melodious Priest of Middle-Age Catholicism. May we not call Shakspeare the still more melodious Priest of a *true* Catholicism, the 'Universal Church' of the Future and of all times? No narrow superstition, harsh asceticism, intolerance, fanatical fierceness or perversion: a Revelation, so far as it goes, that such a thousandfold hidden beauty and divineness dwells in all Nature; which let all men worship as they can! We may say without offence, that there rises a kind of universal Psalm out of this Shakspeare too: not unfit to make itself heard among the still more sacred Psalms. Not in disharmony with these, if we understood them, but in harmony! — I cannot call this Shakspeare a 'Sceptic,' as some do; his indifference to the creeds and theological quarrels of his time misleading them. No: neither unpatriotic, though he says little about his Patriotism; nor sceptic, though he says little about his Faith. Such 'indifference' was the fruit of his greatness withal: his whole heart was in his own grand sphere of worship (we may call it such); these other controversies, vitally important to other men, were not vital to him.

But call it worship, call it what you will, is it not a right glorious thing, and set of things, this that Shakspeare has brought us? For myself, I feel that there is actually a kind of sacredness in the fact of such a man being sent into this Earth. Is he not an eye to us all; a blessed heaven-sent Bringer of Light? — And, at bottom, was it not perhaps far better that this Shakspeare, everyway an unconscious man, was *conscious* of no Heavenly message? He did not feel, like Mahomet because he saw into those internal Splendours, that he specially was the 'Prophet of God:' and was he not greater than Mahomet in that? Greater; and also, if we compute strictly, as we did in Dante's case, more successful. It was intrinsically an error that notion of Mahomet's, of his supreme Prophethood; and has come down to us inextricably involved in error to this day; dragging along with it such a coil of fables, impurities, intolerances, as makes it a ques-

tionable step for me here and now to say, as I have done, that Mahomet was a true Speaker at all, and not rather an ambitious charlatan, perversity and simulacrum; no Speaker, but a Babbler! Even in Arabia, as I compute, Mahomet will have exhausted himself and become obsolete, while this Shakspeare, this Dante may still be young; — while this Shakspeare may still pretend to be a Priest of Mankind, of Arabia as of other places, for unlimited periods to come!

Compared with any speaker or singer one knows, even with Æschylus or Homer, why should he not, for veracity and universality, last like them? He is *sincere* as they; reaches deep down like them, to the universal and perennial. But as for Mahomet, I think it had been better for him *not* to be so conscious! Alas, poor Mahomet; all that he was *conscious* of was a mere error; a futility and triviality, — as indeed such ever is. The truly great in him too was the unconscious: that he was a wild Arab lion of the desert, and did speak-out with that great thunder-voice of his, not by words which he *thought* to be great, but by actions, by feelings, by a history which *were* great! His Koran has become a stupid piece of prolix absurdity; we do not believe, like him, that God wrote that! The great Man here too, as always, is a Force of Nature: whatsoever is truly great in him springs-up from the *in*articulate deeps.

Well: this is our poor Warwickshire Peasant, who rose to be Manager of a Playhouse, so that he could live without begging; whom the Earl of Southampton cast some kind glances on; whom Sir Thomas Lucy, many thanks to him, was for sending to the Treadmill! We did not account him a god, like Odin, while he dwelt with us; — on which point there were much to be said. But I will say rather, or repeat: In spite of the sad state Hero-worship now lies in, consider what this Shakspeare has actually become among us. Which Englishman we ever made, in this land of ours, which million of Englishmen, would we not give-up rather than the Stratford Peasant? There is no regi-

ment of highest Dignitaries that we would sell him for. He is the grandest thing we have yet done. For our honour among foreign nations, as an ornament to our English Household, what item is there that we would not surrender rather than him? Consider now, if they asked us, Will you give-up your Indian Empire or your Shakspeare, you English; never have had any Indian Empire, or never have had any Shakspeare! Really it were a grave question. Official persons would answer doubtless in official language; but we, for our part too, should not we be forced to answer: Indian Empire, or no Indian Empire; we cannot do without Shakspeare! Indian Empire will go, at any rate, some day; but this Shakspeare does not go, he lasts forever with us; we cannot give-up our Shakspeare!

Nay, apart from spiritualities; and considering him merely as a real, marketable, tangibly-useful possession. England, before long, this Island of ours, will hold but a small fraction of the English; in America, in New Holland, east and west to the very Antipodes, there will be a Saxondom covering great spaces of the Globe. And now, what is it that can keep all these together into virtually one Nation, so that they do not fall-out and fight, but live at peace, in brotherlike intercourse, helping one another? This is justly regarded as the greatest practical problem, the thing all manner of sovereignties and governments are here to accomplish: what is it that will accomplish this? Acts of Parliament, administrative prime-ministers cannot. America is parted from us, so far as Parliament could part it. Call it not fantastic, for there is much reality in it: Here, I say, is an English King, whom no time or chance, Parliament or combination of Parliaments, can dethrone! This King Shakspeare, does not he shine, in crowned sovereignty, over us all, as the noblest, gentlest, yet strongest of rallying-signs; *in*destructible; really more valuable in that point of view than any other means or appliance whatsoever? We can fancy him as radiant aloft over all the Nations of Englishmen, a thousand years hence. From Paramatta, from New York, wheresoever, under what sort of

Parish-Constable soever, English men and women are, they will say to one another: "Yes, this Shakspeare is ours; we produced him, we speak and think by him; we are of one blood and kind with him." The most common-sense politician, too, if he pleases, may think of that.

Yes, truly, it is a great thing for a Nation that it get an articulate voice; that it produce a man who will speak-forth melodiously what the heart of it means! Italy, for example, poor Italy lies dismembered, scattered asunder, not appearing in any protocol or treaty as a unity at all; yet the noble Italy is actually *one*:[9] Italy produced its Dante; Italy can speak! The Czar of all the Russias, he is strong, with so many bayonets, Cossacks and cannons; and does a great feat in keeping such a tract of Earth politically together; but he cannot yet speak. Something great in him, but it is a dumb greatness. He has had no voice of genius, to be heard of all men and times. He must learn to speak. He is a great dumb monster hitherto. His cannons and Cossacks will all have rusted into nonentity, while that Dante's voice is still audible. The nation that has a Dante is bound together as no dumb Russia can be. — We must here end what we had to say of the *Hero-Poet*.

[9] Italy has been politically *one* since 1870.

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